

JOSEPH PARKER D.D.
HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

ALBERT DAWSON

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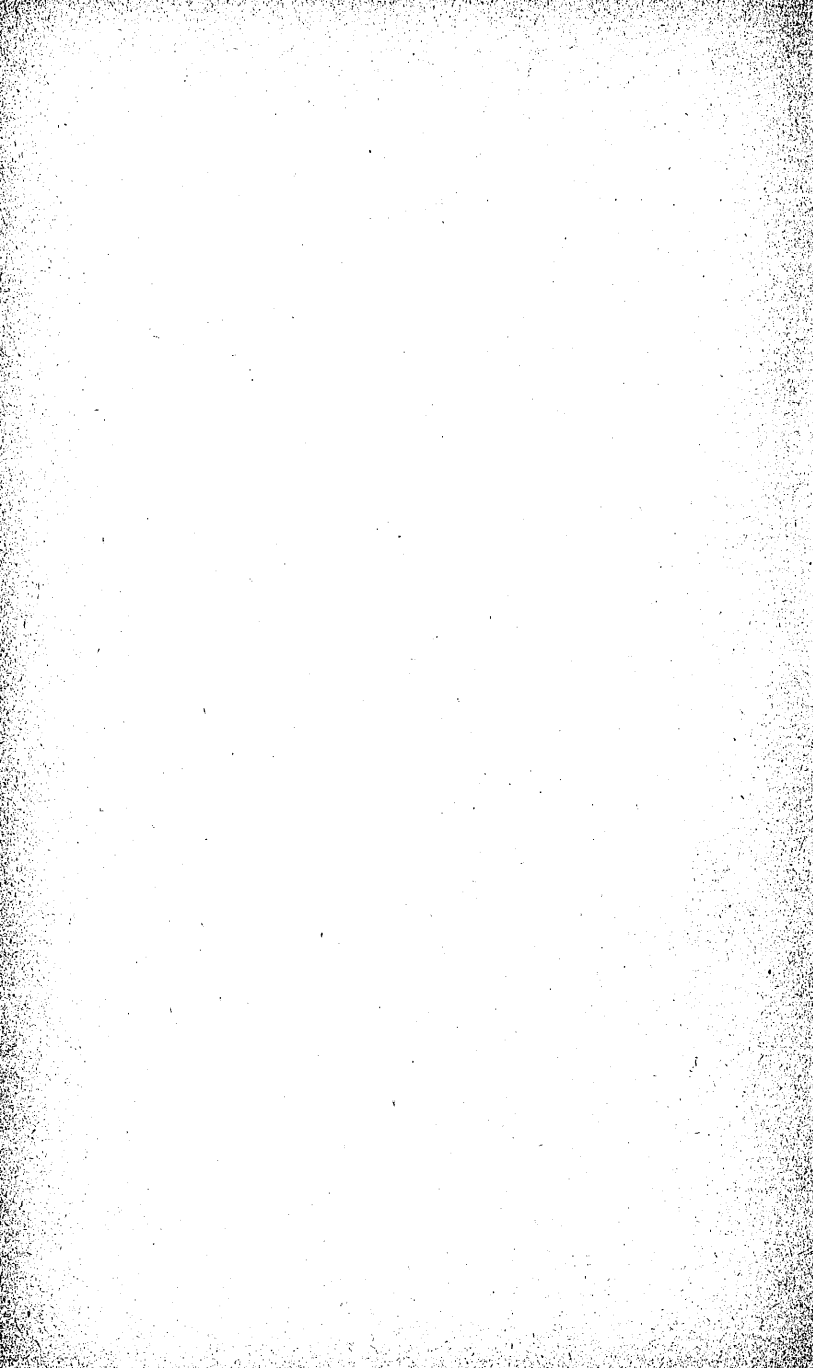
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JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.



New Century Leaders Series.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

His Life and Ministry.

MINISTER OF THE CITY TEMPLE, LONDON.

Author of "The People's Bible," &c.

BY

ALBERT DAWSON,

Sometime his Literary Assistant and Private Secretary.

LONDON :

S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO.,
8 & 9, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1901.

SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES BY
THE PILGRIM PRESS,
BOSTON AND CHICAGO.

Y 760 311 BX 5207
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PREFACE.

THE fact that this little book was written by request of the publishers, who determined its length and date of publication, explains its appearance at this time and some of its obvious limitations. The time has not yet come (may it be long delayed!) for issuing a complete record of one of the most remarkable lives of the age. The present is an attempt to supply, what has not hitherto existed, a handy, popular, consecutive narrative of a great career, so far as it has gone. Readers who desire fuller treatment of certain stages and phases of it are referred to *Tyne Chylde: My Life and Teaching*, and *A Preacher's Life: An Autobiography and an Album*. Some slight use is made of these two fascinating works in the following pages, but most of the personal allusions herein quoted are derived from other sources, and many of them have the charm of being unpremeditated self-revelations. It may be added that, while Dr. Parker kindly acquiesced in the publication of this life-sketch, it was prepared, from material which has been accumulating for years, wholly without consultation with him, and that he had not seen a single line at the time of going to press. And, perhaps, it should be further noted

that the book is written from an absolutely independent standpoint, the author not now being in Dr. Parker's service.

As this book will probably fall into the hands of some who are in possession of interesting data relating to its subject, not included or referred to in these pages, the author ventures to invite correspondence from them. Any letters or other documents that might be lent would be promptly returned. He would also be glad to hear from anybody who has for disposal any volumes or numbers of the *Congregational Economist*, the *Pulpit Analyst*, the *City Temple* (1869-1873), the *Fountain*, or the *Christian Chronicle*.

ALBERT DAWSON.

*Ingleneuk, East Finchley,
London, N.*

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Cannot give up the argument from Design.

1. Science has never seen the SOUL

2. Laws of nature are fixed & unchangeable.
Where? Which?

3. Only matter can affect matter?
Where? (Mind starting the actions of
the body - Telegraph & everything)

4. Unbelief has greater effects than
FAITH

5 FAITH Constrains towards
Discipline
Service
Character

INTRODUCTORY.

HOWEVER much people differ in their estimate of the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., all who have any real knowledge of the man agree that he is one of the most notable figures of the time. It would be affectation not to recognise the fact that opinion as to his personality and influence greatly varies. But where unfavourable views are entertained, usually they can be traced to ignorance, prejudice, or misconception. The number of his detractors has dwindled to an insignificant few; those who admire and love him are an ever-increasing multitude. It is greatly to be regretted that he is chiefly known to a considerable section of the public by detached incidents or expressions that reveal only a small part or passing phase of his flexible mind and multifold personality. It is no exaggeration to say that the real, the whole Dr. Parker is unknown to the most of those who are familiar with his name, including many who in genius are his natural kin. Any one who dismisses him with a depreciatory sneer or a contemptuous epithet, by so much proves himself totally unqualified to form a just opinion of the man whom he presumes to condemn. Because of the very strength and variety of his

genius Dr. Parker is not easily understood. Of the many lines that divide human beings into kinds and classes, none is more evident and unalterable than that which separates the small minority who have genius from the vast majority who have it not. To the former category Joseph Parker unquestionably belongs. Comparatively few people are aware of the full range of his faculties and the versatility of his accomplishments, by means of which he could have made his mark in any walk of life, and attained eminence in more than one. He has lived to become, certainly one of the greatest—in the opinion of not a few the greatest—of the preachers of the age; and the predominance in him of the spiritual or religious instinct indicates the pulpit as his proper sphere. Yet, without doubt, had he chosen a secular platform and figured as politician, lecturer, or propagandist, he would still have been an orator of the first rank and a powerful force in social life, possibly commanding an even wider audience and attaining still greater popularity than are his to-day. Had he adopted the profession of law, few advisers are more acute and far-seeing, few special pleaders more eloquent, more skilful in presenting facts, more convincing in argument, few judges more penetrating and equitable, than Joseph Parker could have been. Early in his career he received an alluring offer to exchange the Church for the Bar. Probably this was the greatest temptation of his life, for Courts of Justice have always exercised special fascination over him, and in studying proceedings in them, as

he has often done, he could not help being conscious—genuinely modest in the estimate of his own ability as he undoubtedly is, whatever may be the popular impression—of the possession of powers that would have enabled him to distinguish himself at the Bar or on the Bench.

Throughout his life Dr. Parker has daily exemplified the virtues of punctuality and promptitude, the ability to read character and handle men, the habit of never missing an opportunity, that make for success in the world of business. As actor, mimic, or public entertainer, he could have amassed a large fortune with far less effort than has been necessary to secure his present measure of success and independence. In private, Dr. Parker's genius is, in some respects, even more manifest than it is in public. His conversation is unlike that of any other man ; the turn of every sentence reveals unconscious power, and the more natural and free he is the more distinctive and brilliant does he become. His command of epigram, his extraordinary facility in the use of metaphor and illustration, his power of life-like characterisation in a sentence, his keen and ready wit, his light and sunny humour, his great gift of mimicry, make his society as enjoyable and stimulating as it is instructive and elevating.

To a man of commanding intellect and spiritual insight, the whole outlook of life is necessarily quite different from what it is to ordinary mortals. He sees things at another angle and in a different perspective from what we do, and easily penetrates surfaces and disguises, estimating habits and cus-

toms at their real worth, and getting as near to the heart and reality of things as is possible to the human mind. Here we come upon what is to some the stone of stumbling and rock of offence. A man of the calibre of Dr. Parker is quite willing, indeed anxious, for the sake of the weaker brother, or because of social convenience, to observe the numerous artificial conventions that have become bound up with modern, especially ecclesiastical, life ; but, if need arise, he does not hesitate to ride roughshod through all merely arbitrary arrangements, with the inevitable result that many good folk who do not, or cannot, distinguish between the essential and the unimportant, the permanent and the passing, are shocked, and may become actively hostile.

Before we can begin to understand Dr. Parker we must take account of the diverse elements that constitute the man. He has brain enough and emotion enough for half-a-dozen men ; is, indeed, in a sense, six men in one. His "infinite variety" must express itself in innumerable forms, and it is impossible that these should be equally acceptable to all people. Only those who know him can always discriminate between what are to him merely momentary diversions and mental athletics, and the serious occupations and purposes of his life.

The degree in which a man attracts others, and retains the loyalty of those brought into close touch with him, is some measure of his quality and character. Among Dr. Parker's most regular hearers and most ardent admirers to-day are not a few who first listened to him more than thirty years ago in

the old Poultry Chapel. Several of his deacons have been associated with him throughout that long period. The late organist of the City Temple served without pecuniary reward for seventeen years. The late sexton became attached to Dr. Parker in Banbury, and, coming to London when the City Temple was built, rendered its minister devoted personal service for nearly a quarter of a century. That sexton's sister has been Dr. Parker's housekeeper for nearly forty years. The wife of the present sexton served in his household long before her marriage. The writer of these lines can look back upon nearly twenty years of more or less intimate relation to Dr. Parker, and, as his knowledge of the world, and experience of men, ministerial and lay, have extended, and knowing all that has been said and can be said about him, he certainly has not come to think less of his old master.

On the purely intellectual side Dr. Parker betrays to close observers a natural bias towards scepticism—at all events, in the sense of question-asking; on the spiritual and emotional side his faith is large and strong. The cleverest and most convinced unbeliever could not suggest any difficulties in the way of religious faith in general, or acceptance of Christianity in particular, that have not always been obvious to him who as a young man contended with the foremost secularist of his day, and probably he could present the champions of unbelief with a few points that have not occurred to them. The fiercest display of theological polemics that the "Hall of Science" ever witnessed is as nothing compared with the battle royal that has proceeded at one time

and another in the mind of Dr. Parker. What a blessing it is that one who, had he been in the opposite camp, would have been as formidable an opponent as can be imagined, is found on the right side, his faith becoming stronger and his preaching more evangelical as the years gather upon him !

To young men who wish to make their way in the world against adverse circumstances a study of the life of Dr. Parker must prove specially helpful and stimulating. The full tale of what he has endured, overcome, and accomplished is a secret that will die with him. But the known facts of his career constitute a sufficiently marvellous record. The contrast between his lowly origin and his present unique position, the thought of all that lies between, and the remembrance that all the achievements associated with his name have been realised, under God, by his own innate strength, must surely impress the dullest imagination. Do people realise that the City Temple would in all probability never have come into existence but for Dr. Parker ? And while the erection of the building was no small feat, the filling of it for more than a quarter of a century is an immeasurably greater achievement. The Thursday service alone would ensure for any man lasting renown. To have sustained single-handed such a service in the City of London for more than thirty-one years, bringing together week by week a congregation of from a thousand to fifteen hundred, and for that service to increase in vitality and to be more and more appreciated each succeeding year, is an unparalleled record. Add to this the fact that Dr. Parker is the author of some forty volumes, that

preachers of all degrees and denominations confess their indebtedness to him, that people of all stations testify that by his teaching they have been enlightened, comforted, and constrained to lead better lives, and we begin to get some idea of the extent of his services to humanity.

The prime secret of Dr. Parker's phenomenal success and prolonged effectiveness is his perfect self-mastery. Having made up his mind to follow a certain line of action—whether in relation to study, or diet, or domestic routine, or preaching, or public work—he has resolutely adhered to it, going steadily forward without deviation or relaxation, and successfully repelling all influences that would turn him from his purpose. In a very literal sense he has kept his body under. His life is one unbroken record of self-discipline. Hard work, fresh air, systematic exercise, cold baths, regular meals, plain food, total abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, early to bed and early to rise, the severest economy of time, doing the day's work within the day, duty before pleasure, attention to details as well as to great issues : these are some of the watchwords that have dominated his life with Spartan rigour, and have necessarily involved no little self-sacrifice. Having at the start a sound physical constitution and a powerful mind, he has taken care of both, developing them to their highest point of efficiency. Consequently, while he has accomplished a prodigious amount of work, he is, at seventy-one, healthier, stronger, and more effective than many men half his age.

Great as have been Dr. Parker's achievements,

and notable as are his utterances, one cannot escape the feeling that he has not yet fully realised himself or exerted all his powers. He has within him the kind and degree of force that might be so directed as to move nations and revolutionise thought and practice. One sometimes wishes that he would shake off certain restraints, which hamper the free play and full development of his individuality. But the end is not yet. Maybe, before the day is done, he will speak the climacteric word and perform the crowning deed, eclipsing all that has gone before.

The foregoing is some slight indication of the man whose life we are going to study, and of the spirit in which it will be set forth.

I.

EARLY DAYS.

JOSEPH PARKER was born on April 9th, 1830, at Hexham, Northumberland, and here, on the banks of the Tyne, he spent the first twenty-two years of his life. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was then one year old; C. H. Spurgeon saw the light four years later. Our hero's father, who, on his mother's side came of yeoman Northumbrian stock, was a stone-mason and builder. It is interesting to note that D. L. Moody, Dr. Kitto, Dr. Cumming, and Thomas Carlyle, were likewise sons of masons, whilst William Jay, of Bath, and Hugh Miller, the geologist, themselves worked for a time at the trade. Joseph Parker has himself drawn vivid portraits of his parents, and to some extent they supply the key to his own personality. Of his father he writes :—"A strange figure that old stone-squarer, both as man and master ; with the strength of two men and the will of ten ; fierce and gentle, with passionateness burning to madness, yet with deepest love of prayer ; no namby-pamby speaker weighing words in troy scales, and mincing syllables as if afraid of them ; hating lies as he hated hell itself—with him every known man was an angel or a fiend—a lie was no slip of the tongue, it was notorious, scandalous, diabolical, infamous, and

infernal—adjectives going for nothing in the swell and rush of his fierce emphasis. A terrible man to people who lived in another zone and spoke a soft and milky language ; but a very Hercules and hero to those who could play with tigers and hunt with wolves. I see him now with sloe-black eyes, fist of iron, chest that needed no smith-made mail, and with a gait that might have suggested the proprietorship of the entire solar system."

Joseph Parker's mother was "a character of extraordinary depth and religiousness," and very reverent and filial are his references to her :—"So quiet, so patient, so full of hope ; seeing everything without looking, praying much, and teaching her son to pray." And again : "Sweet mother ! A sort of superstitious woman withal, and not indisposed to believe in ghosts. She was never quite comfortable without a twig of rowan tree in the house, and could never comfortably begin anything new on a Friday. How glad, too, the dear soul was when she had a good 'first-foot' on New Year's morning, for that 'foot' mysteriously hinted at the character and fortune of the whole year."

This element of superstition passed in some measure from mother to son ; for, in late life, he says : "I like a little superstition ; I have a good deal of it, I owe a good deal to it. I got it all from my mother . . . It was no use sending a whole academy down to talk to her ; she would admit every word the academy said, and then go to see that the rowan tree was still on the edge of the clock—to keep the bogies away. It was all right. Nor would she have a peacock feather in the house ;

all peacock feathers were with her associated with some kind of doom, distress, sudden death, and marvellous ministries not to be named. But she could pray; but for that superstitious side of her nature she could not have prayed as she did, taking a square hold of God and saying, 'I will not let Thee go, though the morning is lightening on the hills, until Thou bless me.' "

The current of affection between mother and son ran strong and deep; he was passionately devoted to her, and as he grew up he became the joy and pride of her life. Joseph used to like to sit near her with paper and pencil in hand, and beg her to make one line of a hymn that he might try and add three lines to it. The memory of his own mother has for him invested all motherhood and womanhood with added sanctity. Thus, many years after she had run her earthly course, we find him uttering from the pulpit of the City Temple a scathing protest against the House of Commons for laughing at a Member who had announced his intention to vote for the Woman Suffrage Bill because his mother wished him to do so. "God's curse," said the preacher, "lies over any House of Parliament that would laugh at such a man." When Dr. Parker re-visited Hexham, in January, 1889, he must have been touched and pleased by the remark made by a native—"Oh, but he is like his mother!"

In quaint, historic Hexham the Parkers lived, first in the market-place, then in Priestpopple, and next on the higher part of Battle Hill. Under the shadow of the venerable abbey the mason's son grew up,

playing with his companions in the narrow, irregular streets, and amusing himself much after the fashion of boys everywhere. One of his childish delights was "the coloured bubbles thrown from the pipe of fun"; with other children he played at "tig-tag" or "touch"; at times his pockets bulged with cherry stones; marbles was his favourite game, and his prowess herein earned him the title of "champion." As a boy he once tried fishing in his native Tyne, but the experiment was not a success. One of his schoolmasters, who was quite an adept with the rod, took him one Saturday afternoon to fish in the river. "I had leggings on," says Joseph, "that would have protected me from the ravages of the Atlantic, and I had a rod and line which seemed to me long enough to reach from Northumberland to Newfoundland, and strong enough to make havoc amongst the cod of the Transatlantic waters. Unfortunately my foot slipped; I fell into the river, was withdrawn half alive from the stream, and from that day to this I do not remember to have touched a rod." Doubtless in those far-off days people going to and fro in the town were struck by the appearance of the boy, with his remarkable head, his dark curly hair, and keen blue eyes; none could have surmised what great things were in store for him.

From his earliest days the boy was the subject of religious influences. The Bible was the book most read in his father's house, and thus from infancy the future preacher was nurtured on the Word of God. In cases of special perplexity the mother "would take a Bible, pray briefly, open it, and according to

the passage which was next to her right hand thumb, she would interpret the will of Heaven. This, she said, was the habit of the good John Wesley, and what Wesley did was right." It is not surprising that to the son of a mother, whose faith was so simple and so strong, communion with the Divine Spirit came natural, and that his boyhood was steeped in prayer. His natural bent towards the serious and solemn side of life was doubtless strengthened by the rigour with which the Sabbath was observed by the family and the kind of reading provided for that day. The only books permitted to be perused on Sunday were the Bible and Watts's Psalms and Hymns, and such works as Hervey's "Meditations among the Tombs." The day was divided between Sunday-school and chapel, school beginning at nine o'clock, the preaching at ten, school again at two, and preaching again at six.

Having from childhood "felt after" God, it would probably not be correct to say that Joseph passed through any great spiritual crisis that could be described as conversion, but he has himself told us that one summer Sunday night, when walking with his father and Sunday-school teacher, he definitely declared his love to Christ and asked Him to take his child heart into His own gracious keeping. In his teens a copy of "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" falling into his hands, he spent many cloudy and stormy days thinking that he had to pass through all the heart-searching and heart-breaking experience described by Bunyan. Feeling that he had not been so vile and detestable a character, outwardly at least, he was oppressed by the fear that

he could not repent in the right way : " So I stood outside the gate, crying bitter tears, because I had not sinned according to the magnitude and quality of another man's transgression." But he came to see that it was not necessary or possible for every one to pass through an identical spiritual experience.

His school-life was varied and not wholly happy. His first master he describes as " a fiend " and the counterpart of " Mr. Squeers." Many a thrashing Joseph, in common with other boys, endured at the hands of this tyrant, and it is evident that the smart lingers to this day. " Long days " were passed " in terror of the rod, a truant after hare and hounds, or feigning sickness to get to wood and water, and where bird-nesting made the day seem short—a clever cheating of the master, spectacled and wise in look, but sour as if crab-poisoned, and irate with anger never more than half asleep." Much pleasanter is the memory of subsequent instructors. After " the fiend " came one who was a born teacher, an enthusiast in his work, who took the boys home to his lodging that they might together thrash out some problem. The third master was a man of wide culture, under whom Joseph studied Greek and Latin. The fourth teacher, the Rev. Joseph Walker, was " a good soul, who had no cane and made no boy unhappy." Joseph's school fees were a penny a week at the first school, fifteen shillings a quarter at the second, and a £1 a quarter at the third.

Before the lad was twelve years of age he began to " talk," and in his teens he was an ardent and

aggressive teetotaller. He was connected with a drum and fife band conducted in the cause of teetotalism, and remembers "on one occasion dragging another boy with me, whilst I played the fife, through the streets of the little town, announcing at intervals that at seven o'clock the same evening I would address a meeting in the temperance hall." By the time he was fourteen the oft-discussed question, "What is Joseph to be?" had reached an acute stage. It was "decided" that he should follow his father's trade; but man proposes, God disposes. The lad pluckily donned the moleskins, though with such a mind and ambition as were his it cannot be imagined that he regarded the work of a mason with any satisfaction. The experiment did not last long. Within a year we find him back at school, as usher, receiving payment partly in money and partly in instruction. There was some thought of making him an architect, and for a time he was busy with drawing-board and instruments; but this parental idea had also to be abandoned, and Joseph again returned to his books. When he was about sixteen years of age the Rev. Thomas Rogers, being on a visit to Hexham, was consulted about the boy's future. "I see in my father's house two huge strong men. They were doing something which seemed to require the aid of two long clay pipes. The one man was my own father, the other man was the father of Dr. Guinness Rogers. These two men, well advanced in years, but two giants, two tremendous men to meet in opposition, were discussing the career of a boy who was sitting within listening distance. That boy had composed a verse

of a hymn ; he has now forgotten it ; but Mr. Rogers seemed to be somewhat impressed by it."

All this time the young life had been cherishing a secret ambition to be a preacher of the Gospel, and early began to qualify himself for the sacred vocation. He eagerly devoured all the literature to which he could gain access, borrowing his first books from the Mechanics' Institute. "I well remember having a triangular bookcase, if case it could be called, the first shelf about thirty inches long, and the second about five-and-twenty, and the third shelf decreasing in proportion ; and the green cords tying it all up to a nail in the wall. There was Zimmerman on *Solitude* [Joseph's favourite book], and Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, and two or three or half-a-dozen more books, more to me than ever the British Museum library was or is likely to be." He early taught himself shorthand, which at that time was a much rarer accomplishment than it is to-day, and has continued to utilise the art ever since. "When I was learning Phonography, it was a blessing to me to get hold of some halting, hesitating speaker, that I might take him down in the longest style of shorthand—long before we knew anything about grammalogues. I was able just to take him down in long, sinewy forms, and almost to vocalise him." He studied the art of speaking, and diligently practised elocution. Long before he had left his teens he bought the speeches of Charles James Fox, and committed large portions to memory. He went up and down the quiet roads of Hexham declaiming the great speech on the Westminster Scrutiny, thus alarming certain ladies who were taking an airing in

the adjoining fields. During the time of the Irish sedition trials he procured the speeches of Smith O'Brien, Thomas Meagher, and other orators. After studying them he pinned the newspaper slips to his bedroom wall-paper and paced the room, vehemently pleading with an imaginary jury. Another exercise was to read aloud, as if to make a thousand persons hear his voice, the whole of *Paradise Lost*. Having committed the fifth book to memory, he harangued woods and fields, beasts and birds, respecting the dream of Eve. It was also his custom to commit large portions of the Bible to memory and utter these in his solitary walks just as he would have read them in the largest public assembly.

This practice naturally led up to preaching in the open air. "Wanting in my soul to preach . . . I boldly stood up and preached! I asked no permission; I made no bow of homage to custom or authority; but being moved to preach I stood up on a high stone, and preached Jesus and the Resurrection." In his early teens he was in the habit of addressing boys' meetings and making an active figure in local debating societies. When he was seventeen he used to give addresses in a little village, "and when I went home to the poor old mother, who received the preachers, she would say, 'Perhaps, Joseph, you don't mind not having any milk in your tea, for I have not got any.' Said I, 'Not a bit; what do I care for milk? Why, to have this tea given as you have given it, it is rich with the thickest cream, sweet with the sweetest sugar.'"

He dates his first "sermon" from his eighteenth year. It was delivered from a sawpit on a village green.

One Sunday afternoon in June, 1848, he accompanied two local preachers from Hexham to the place of meeting four miles from home. The rustic villagers having seated themselves on beams and planks, the service proceeded. After singing and prayer, one of the local preachers delivered a sermon, and, another hymn having been sung, the second preacher followed. When he went to the village green, Joseph Parker had no intention of speaking, but whilst listening to the second preacher he was seized with an overpowering desire to unburden his soul. Borrowing a New Testament, he, as soon as the second preacher had finished, stood bolt upright on the crossbeams of the sawpit and read out as his text, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you." (Luke x. 14.) It is not difficult to imagine how greatly the villagers were startled and impressed alike by the striking figure, the powerful voice, and the burning words of the youthful speaker. Describing the incident after the lapse of many years, the preacher says: "Not one word of the sermon can I remember. As for ideas, probably there were none to recollect. I do remember, however, the tone of denunciation. I did not spare the iniquities of the age; I loosed all the thunders I could command, and delivered my soul with audacious frankness. The sermon was necessarily extemporaneous. Neither thought nor word had I prepared. I simply knew that the age was corrupt, and taking the hundred rustics as representative of the total iniquity, I hurled upon them the thunderbolts of outraged heaven. Some persons are kind enough to think that even now I am not

wholly destitute of energy, but I can assure them that at eighteen, volcanoes, tornadoes, whirlwinds, and other energetics cut a very secondary figure when I was on the 'sawpit.'

His second sermon also was preached in the country in the open air. It was again a balmy summer afternoon, the air redolent with the fragrance of flowers and musical with the singing of birds. But once more the young preacher, standing under a hedge thick with roses, chose a minatory text: "If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me." (Deut. xxxii. 41.) This deliverance so impressed one of the preacher's youthful admirers that he addressed to him a little poem commencing

Ardent, enthusiastic youth,
Fit herald of the glorious truth
That God for man has died.

His third sermon was delivered in the evening twilight at a wheelwright's door, the pulpit being a large block of old oak. Although his efforts, in the absence of anyone else, to lead the singing were not conspicuously successful, "the sermon went like an equinoctial gale." Afterwards the villagers crowded round him imploring him to come again, and that invitation he regards as his call to the ministry. Another notable sermon was delivered near a blacksmith's shop, and others followed in the green lanes around Hexham and in the neighbouring villages. At one time and another he preached in Haydon Bridge, Haltwhistle, Corbridge, Acomb, Wall, Humshaugh, Wylam, Horsley, Newbrough, Oving-

ton, Matfen, and Stamfordham. Often he walked fourteen miles to his appointments, and many a time he ate his dinner off the warm lid of a round oven.

Although our hero's gifts as a preacher were thus early manifest, the way was not yet open for him to enter the regular ministry. Meanwhile, he taught in the Sunday-school of the Independent Church, Hexham. The pastor, the Rev. James Frame, was once asked, "How did young Parker impress you when he attended your church, and taught in your school? Did he assume airs, shake his head at some of your statements, seeming to say, 'Your sermons are poor, and I know one who could do better'?" "Far from it," Mr. Frame answered. "I never met with a more modest and unassuming young man in any church. He went in and out in a quiet, unostentatious manner; taught his class in the Sunday school with earnestness and success; did not mingle much with other teachers or young men of his own age; but was of a retiring disposition, meditative, and loving solitude. When called upon to address the children, he did so after careful preparation, and with marked effect. His composition was elaborate and polished, in many respects resembling his present style. He was looked upon generally as destined to make his mark in the world, but in what direction was uncertain." For a time Joseph Parker added to his other religious activities that of tract distributor, and spent many a pleasant afternoon in calling at house after house, exchanging one tract for another.

When about nineteen years of age he took over the day-school from which one of his former

masters had retired. He christened it Ebenezer Seminary, and issued a prospectus in which he announced his succession to the post of principal and offered to teach grammar, algebra, Latin, Greek, and book-keeping. The circular concluded with the audacious words, "The conductor of Ebenezer Seminary does not undertake to supply his pupils with brains." All this time he was assiduously qualifying himself for the ministry. He closely studied his Greek Testament ; he rose at six o'clock in the morning to read theology with a minister, and underwent periodical examinations.

II.

"ANNIE."

THE tenderest and most moving of all Dr. Parker's early autobiographical allusions is to "Annie, the soul I loved, the girl that saved me and made me a man." The story of his wooing, as told by himself in "Tyne Chylde," is a charming idyll over which one lingers with sacred delight. The cup of the young and ardent lover overflowed with the richest, purest nectar.

Ann Nesbitt was a daughter of William Nesbitt, farmer, of Horsley-on-Tyne. Horsley is about ten miles from Hexham, and the Nesbitts and young Parker became acquainted through his preaching in the neighbourhood. A trustee and deacon of Horsley Congregational Church, Mr. Nesbitt would naturally be specially interested in the young preacher whose fame was spreading throughout the district. Mrs. Nesbitt was a kindly cheerful soul, who looked with an indulgent eye on Joseph when he "went a-wooing to her sweet Annie. . . She called us both very silly, and wondered how we could go on so, and, putting a corner of her apron to her kind eyes, she hoped we would always be happy." Annie was always to be young, and Joseph was always to offer her all his love, and life was to open before them broadly and sunnily, and by-and-by they were to

keep the good old folks when working days were done. On Sunday nights Joseph brought them all the news of the town, and slept in a "snug little chamber" in the old farmhouse. Ann Nesbitt's character was one of rare sweetness, gentleness, and refinement. One form in which her deep religious feeling found expression was in writing hymns.

The young couple were married on November 15th, 1851, in Hexham Congregational Church. Joseph Parker was then a little more than twenty-one-and-a-half years of age—a few days older than C. H. Spurgeon was at the time of his marriage. John Bunyan took to himself a wife at the age of nineteen; General Booth and Mr. Gladstone went to the altar at twenty-six. No doubt from a merely worldly point of view, Joseph Parker's marriage at this comparatively early age, with his future still uncertain, was a hazardous if not imprudent proceeding; but he never had occasion to regret the step he took. The fond and filial dreams of the lovers were, however, only partly fulfilled. For, after twelve years' happy married life—comprising six months in Hexham, a year or two in London, five years in Banbury, and five in Manchester—Mr. Parker was bereaved of the wife who had been his loving companion and wise counsellor during what was perhaps the most critical and formative period of his life.

As a public man Dr. Parker has been subjected to severe and frequent criticism, but no one has ever accused him of lack of duty or affection in his private and domestic relations. He was a devoted son and a faithful and adoring husband, and his

heart overflows with gratitude to those who ministered to him in the family circle. When, in 1899, Horsley Congregational Church was rebuilt, Dr. Parker presented a beautiful stained glass window, bearing the following inscription :—"In ever loving memory of Ann Nesbitt, for twelve years the devoted wife of Joseph Parker, Minister of the City Temple, London, this window is reverently and gratefully erected by the man whose life she did so much to mould." The pulpit, a handsome structure of grained oak, given at the same time, is thus inscribed :—"In grateful memory of William Nesbitt, of Horsley Hills, to whom the Church herein assembling is deeply indebted for long-continued and invaluable service, this pulpit is affectionately erected by his son-in-law, Joseph Parker."

(From "Tyne Chylde.")

"The old man and his wife lie in the quiet churchyard ; and Annie—where is she ? Has she grown old along with me ? Would the kind God ever divide lives so intermixed as ours ? Let me read again, and see if I can find one like Annie amongst all the angels that will shine upon me in vision."

III.

STUDENT MINISTRY IN LONDON.

MANY a young man on reaching a critical point in his career, anxious about the future and full of perplexity as to which course to take, has longed for the appearance of an index-finger that would point out the right path ; and not a few have either orally or in writing stated their case to some friend or stranger likely to be able to give the required advice, and feverishly awaited his response. This is precisely what Joseph Parker did in the spring of 1852. He was now a married man, nearing the end of his twenty-second year. Although he had long made up his mind that he wished to devote his life to the ministry of the Gospel, and had shown that he possessed great and peculiar gifts as a preacher of the Word, yet his course was far from clear. In these circumstances he wrote to the Rev. John Campbell, D.D., pastor of Whitefield Tabernacle, Moorfields, and an influential figure in the religious life of London, with whose name he had become familiar through religious magazines. Mr. Parker gave an outline of his life, frankly expressed his aspirations, and asked Dr. Campbell if he could advise him as to his future. Rarely does

such an application meet with so instantaneous and practical a response as that which came to the young man in Hexham from the great divine in London. Doubtless, Dr. Campbell, being a shrewd man and having himself risen from the blacksmith's forge to the pulpit and editorial chair, discerned in the letter (how much one would like to see it !) evidence, of which the writer was probably unconscious, of the strength of his character and the specialty of his gifts ; for he took the remarkable course of inviting the young Northumbrian to come at once to London and to occupy his own pulpit for three Sundays. It was impossible not to see in this opening the hand of Providence, and Mr. Parker naturally resolved to follow the Divine leading.

Before we accompany him to London we must record a pleasing little incident that occurred a month or two prior to his departure from his native town. In the schoolroom of the Independent Church he had delivered, in connection with the Sunday-school, a course of six lectures on "Astronomy and Natural and Sacred History," and in February, 1852, the teachers of the school presented him with a copy of D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, in remembrance of the pleasure and profit they derived from the "very lucid" lectures. The subjects named, added to other lines of study already mentioned, indicate the wide range of Joseph Parker's reading and the variety of his accomplishments before he was twenty-two years of age. One notes with interest that little word "lucid": clearness of thought and expression was

thus early, as it has always been since, the pre-eminent characteristic of his utterances.

On April 9th, 1852, his twenty-second birthday, Mr. Parker travelled to London, received a kindly welcome from Dr. Campbell, and the next Sunday stood in the pulpit of the Tabernacle at Moorfields. His first text was, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest" (Hebrews xii. 18). A Lancashire gentleman who heard this sermon became the preacher's faithful and loyal friend, and thirty-seven years afterwards, on the occasion of his silver wedding, sent him a telegram of congratulation. Mr. Parker preached again in the same pulpit the two following Sundays, as had been arranged, and at Dr. Campbell's request prolonged his stay. Although he was not ordained until he went to Banbury, the next year, this is really the beginning of his ministerial life, and it is a happy coincidence that the ministry that has become one of the most notable features of the City of London should have had its birth in that City.

In London, Mr. Parker found himself for the first time among men who were capable of properly estimating his abilities and directing his course. Several distinguished divines having met him and heard him preach, it was decided that there was no necessity for one who was so richly endowed with natural gifts and had cultivated them to such good purpose, to pass through the usual routine of a theological college. In Dr. Campbell he had a wise counsellor and a qualified theological instructor. It became the practice for the young preacher to write

his sermons, and then, before delivery, read them to his senior, who did not spare his criticism. "His remarks were full of wisdom, point, and genuine pith, and my two poor sermons had often to be swept before them—into the fire!—while I had to set to work on better and more exegetical lines." To a man of Joseph Parker's temperament and genius this must have been a peculiarly trying ordeal, and whilst he gratefully acknowledges the benefit he derived from Dr. Campbell's criticism, it may be surmised that the young man must sometimes have been unable to bring himself into agreement with his monitor.

During the time he spent in London, lodging very comfortably in rooms that cost ten shillings and sixpence a week, Mr. Parker was busily employed in preparing and preaching sermons, in paying pastoral visits, and in studying at University College. According to his own description of himself at this period, he was very thin, with a white face, a large head thickly covered with the darkest brown hair, and wearing, according to the custom of the time, a collar as high as Mr. Gladstone's, a white handkerchief "ample enough for a whole denomination," and a tall silk hat. Whilst in London he wrote a series of articles, entitled *Chapters for Young Thinkers*, dealing with the careers of men who had made their way in the world, and he has humorously described the manner in which he disposed of them. "I was just a raw youth. I went with them in my hand to Cassell's office, but I hadn't the courage to take them in myself, so I paid a boy, who was

standing outside, twopence to take them for me. When I saw him coming out of the shop without them I took to my heels and fled, expecting that the editor and all the staff would be after me for my impertinence. But when John Cassell sent me six guineas, and I read my sketches in the *Popular Educator*, I felt that my fortune was made. I had my carriage and pair and all the rest of the fine things—in imagination.”

While in London Mr. Parker had his first glimpse of Queen Victoria—to whom nearly half a century later he was personally presented. “The State procession was in full progress, and my resolution was firm not to take any part in the public shouting. I was a stern and sullen Republican. Democracy culminated in my obstinacy. On came the cheering procession: shout after shout rent the air. Then the Queen! And where at that moment was my Republicanism? Gone! Evaporated! No man of my size and years shouted more lustily. To hear about Her Majesty was one thing; to see her, and to see that sweetest of all smiles, was another. Her Majesty had such a way of looking—such a broad and generous way—that every man was firmly convinced that she was looking at him only, and went home and told his family so.”

IV.

BANBURY.

WHILE Mr. Parker was in London (1852-3) he for a time supplied the pulpit of the old Barbican Chapel, since demolished, and there was some thought of inviting him to the pastorate. But the Congregational Church at Banbury, Oxfordshire, acted more promptly, and he was ordained as its minister on November 8th, 1853. Here he remained for four years and eight months. From the first his ministry was markedly successful, and probably at no time had he more solid satisfaction and enjoyment in his work than in his Banbury days. He was very careful in the preparation of his sermons, beginning on Tuesday the discourses for the following Sunday and writing them out in full. The church soon became too small to accommodate all those who were anxious to hear the brilliant young preacher, and enlarged and improved buildings were erected. The first chapel seated about four hundred persons; the new building has accommodation for some six hundred. "When I began," says Dr. Parker, "I started upon the dazzling salary of £2 10s. a week, and I did not know, as I told the deacons, what in the name of reason I could do with so much money. They persuaded me to try. I tried, and I always had a

cup of tea for a friend. It was a poor little lodge, the whole thing was only eight shillings a week, but we were always glad to see some minister from the villages round about, and he must not go without his tea. . . . When I was twenty-four years of age, with £2 10s. a week, and in a lodging over a draper's shop, there came in one day a man and said, 'I want you to take this as a little present from me.' I opened it; it was six volumes of a commentary, and I keep those six volumes to-day near my study chair: I often read the little legend on the flyleaf, and look at the '1854.'"

Shortly after Mr. Parker settled at Banbury he had occasion to write to Professor Henry Rogers, of the *Edinburgh Review*. The Professor was so much impressed by the signature of his correspondent that he showed it to his students, with the remark, "Mark that man, and see if he has not a distinguished future." Professor Rogers became a warm friend of his correspondent, and lived to see his prophecy amply fulfilled.

At Banbury Mr. Parker resumed his favourite exercise of preaching in the open air. He went among the very roughest characters in the town, fearlessly rebuked them for their open desecration of the Sabbath, and reasoned with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. At first he encountered the most bitter and violent opposition; every possible insult and indignity was heaped upon him, and more than once his life was in danger. But that dauntless courage and strength of will which have characterised his whole life gradually bore down the fierce antagonism, and

finally won the admiration and respect of some of his worst assailants. Another notable feature of the Banbury days was the effective manner in which he contended with secularistic opponents of Christianity. The memory of the exciting three nights' debate between Joseph Parker and George Jacob Holyoake (the senior by thirteen years) still lingers in the town. The platform discussion of religious and theological questions rarely has any satisfactory issue and frequently does more harm than good, but in this instance the combat was conducted with such perfect fairness, courtesy, and good temper on both sides, that it had at least this happy result—the debaters were inspired with mutual respect and esteem, which they retain to this day. Recalling this early encounter, Mr. Holyoake says: "I lectured in Banbury, and I think Mr. Parker challenged me to discuss my principles. Any way, we met for three nights in public debate. He was very fair and very candid. I saw he was a man of power, but I did not then surmise what a great pulpit master he would become. I have never varied in my friendship for him, and I believe he never has towards myself. At the very beginning of the secularist movement he printed two books against the principles I hold, and very good they were." Some forty years after this controversy Mr. Holyoake gave interesting evidence of his continued admiration for Dr. Parker as a man and a speaker by dedicating to him in the following terms his book on Public Speaking and Debate:—

"Inscribed to the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., himself a Master in the Art, this book is written

to commend, whom the Author found to be fair in discussion, in days when few ministers were so ; and who in later years was his friend, notwithstanding his divergency in theological opinion."

The substance of the arguments and retorts he employed with such good effect against the assailants of Christianity Mr. Parker published under the title of "Six Chapters on Secularism," afterwards expanded into "Helps for Truth Seekers, or Christianity and Scepticism, an Exposition and a Defence." The book was very highly commended by the religious press, and the Rev. George Gilfillan bore emphatic testimony to its excellence.

Another noteworthy achievement of the Banbury days was the winning of a prize of £75 in an essay competition. Desirous of emphasising the obligation of members of the various sections of the Church to uphold the ordinances of religion, the promoters of the "Glasgow Prize Essays" invited members of all evangelical denominations throughout the three kingdoms to compete for two premiums of £150 and £75, for the best papers on "The Duty and Privilege of Christians in regard to the Support of the Ordinances of the Gospel." Eighty-one essays were sent in, fifty-nine being from various parts of Scotland, seventeen from England, and five from Ireland. The adjudicators, three distinguished Scottish divines, after careful and patient investigation, were unanimous in awarding the two prizes respectively to the Rev. Dr. J. A. Wylie, Edinburgh, and the Rev. Joseph Parker, Banbury. This was a very high honour for so comparatively young a man, and an unmistakable indication of his great ability.

In acknowledging the award, Mr. Parker wrote : "To such a man as Dr. Wylie I am glad to stand second ; for he is a veteran in literature and theology, while I am but a 'stripling' having charge of a 'few sheep in the wilderness.'"

A portrait of Mr. Parker in his Banbury days has been drawn by the Rev. Henry Kendall in the course of some reminiscences of Lancashire Independent College :—"Then came the Rev. Joseph Parker, of Banbury, with a thunderous voice and an 'acreage of homely cheek,' and head big enough for two men, hung round with abundant locks of dark hair, which he shook in his frenzies ; a dash of eccentricity in him, but always life, always soul ; orator and dramatist, logician and poet in one ; 'a demon of power,' to quote George Gilfillan of Edward Irving, if such an expression may be used of so good a man. People talked and laughed too, but must needs go hear. Being at tea at Mr. Woodward's, a leading deacon [of Cavendish Street Chapel], to meet a minister staying there, I was asked what the students thought of Mr. Parker. I had an unselfish reason for not wishing at that particular moment to praise him, but honesty compelled me to say that they were very much taken with him. 'Ay, there it is,' said Mr. W——, 'the young people like him, and we shall have to think of them.' The Cavendish Street people bought Joseph Parker for £600." The meaning of this last sentence will be explained in our next chapter.

V.

MANCHESTER.

ONE cannot help being struck by the natural sequence and development of Joseph Parker's ministerial life. Up to the age of twenty-three he went through a long course of mental training and experience in preaching. Unlike most young men who enter the ministry, he did not merely study theological and other questions in the abstract within the seclusion of college walls; early in life they confronted him in practical forms. In his father's house he heard many lengthy and doubtless tolerably acute discussions on almost all things on earth and in heaven. In his youth his native town came strongly under the influence of the Chartist movement, he heard some of the foremost anti-state lecturers, he saw the goods of Dissenters, including some of his own relatives, who refused to pay Church rates, taken from them and sold in the market-place. Coming to London as a young man, he enjoyed the inestimable advantage, before assuming sole charge of a church, of studying life in the metropolis of the world, and in noting the conditions of success in a great city, and the demands made upon the preacher of the Gospel. The five years spent in the quiet of a country town enabled him to realise exactly what it meant to be a Congregational

minister and to sustain the full responsibilities of a pastorate ; he had leisure for study and thought and further self-equipment, while the theological debates in which he took part brought him into contact with some of the intellectual forces with which Christianity has to contend. Then the eleven years in busy Manchester were the best possible preparation for the great undertaking to which he set his hand immediately on coming to London. Had Joseph Parker known from the first what his destiny was to be, and had the mapping-out of his life, he could hardly have wished things to be much different from what they were ; and herein he would be the first to recognise the working of that Providence belief in which is the mainspring of his life.

Whilst Mr. Parker was working quietly and happily at Banbury, rejoicing with the Church in the enlarged opportunities for usefulness afforded by the new buildings, and having no thought of interrupting his work, he received an invitation to preach in Cavendish Street Chapel, Manchester, and occupied that pulpit for three successive Sundays. This church was one of the most important and influential in the North of England, and possessed the finest buildings in the Congregational denomination. For many years the Church had worshipped in Moseley Street Chapel, but in 1848, under the pastorate of the Rev. Robert Halley, D.D., migrated to Cavendish Street. Nine years later he accepted the Principalship of New College, Hampstead, and delivered his farewell sermon on September 20th, 1857. Dr. Halley was a great power in Manchester both on the platform and in the pulpit ; as a preacher he was

highly popular and much sought after. From his youth until his death, at the age of eighty, scarcely a Sunday passed without his appearance in a pulpit, and he had preached in every county in England except Rutland.

It will thus be seen that the minister of Cavendish Street Chapel occupied a very high position alike in the city and in the denomination, and the young pastor of a comparatively small church in the country might feel himself sufficiently honoured in being requested to occupy the pulpit for several Sundays without dreaming of ever having the opportunity of becoming pastor of the church. Indeed, in contrast to his warm-hearted friends at Banbury, the Manchester magnates appeared to their visitor to be somewhat cold and hard, unappreciative and unsympathetic, and he was glad to get back to the more genial atmosphere of his own pastorate. But he had made a far deeper impression than he knew on the hard-headed Lancashire folk. A few weeks after his return home he was surprised to receive an intimation that a deputation from Cavendish Chapel desired to wait upon him. When he received the deputation they presented him with an urgent call to the pastorate. He at once told them in unequivocal language that the Banbury Church having just incurred a debt of some six or seven hundred pounds in connection with his ministry there, he could not while that burden remained entertain the idea of leaving his friends. The Manchester people, however, had set their hearts upon the young minister, and no doubt their desire to secure him was intensified by the straightforward

and honourable course he adopted in connection with the invitation. Within two or three weeks another deputation waited upon him with the offer to pay off the Banbury debt if he would come to Manchester. Presented in this form, the call appeared both to pastor and people one that he ought not to refuse, and with poignant mutual regret they parted, Mr. and Mrs. Parker carrying with them to Manchester tangible tokens of the affection of their Banbury friends.

A more trying position than that in which the new pastor of Cavendish Street Chapel found himself could hardly be imagined. Commencing his ministry there in July, 1858, he was only twenty-eight years of age, and came from a quiet little country charge to a large, wealthy, and influential congregation, in succession to a man more than twice his age, and a leader of his denomination. Mr. Parker had had little experience of the varied and exacting requirements such as he would be expected to meet in the great commercial city. Some of the Manchester people looked with no indulgent eye upon his coming, a few positively resented it. He was young, he had not passed through the usual theological routine in one of the colleges of the denomination, nor had he any university degrees to show.

But the new minister soon revealed the sterling stuff of which he was made. Whatever he lacked in age and experience was made up by inborn genius. Looking back to these early days in Manchester, it becomes clear that while he had many loyal friends and ardent admirers, his success

then, as always, owed almost everything to the sheer strength of his own personality, and little to the aid or influence of others. The chapel, which seated about seventeen hundred people, was soon crowded to overflowing. The week-evening service became one of the most popular and valued features of his ministry. The Rev. Henry Kendall, in his reminiscences, says: "About the time when he (Mr. Parker) came to Cavendish, Dr. (then Mr.) Maclaren came to Oxford Road, and the students (of Lancashire College) were favoured with consummate models in the art of preaching, along with the excellent ministrations of several others less known to fame. Parker used to preach only a quarter of an hour on the week evenings, but he packed a great deal into that short space, and had a large meeting and a good service. . . . The life and power were there, spite of carping criticism, as they are still, together with an almost unequalled combination, in an extempore speaker, such as he is now, of strength and beauty and melody and passion, and it must be said of him that he never got far away from the Gospel nor from the business and bosoms of the people. Antiquarianism in preaching his soul abhors; even to history he gives the cold shoulder; he will have nothing but living and breathing realities."

The minister did not concentrate all his energies upon the pulpit to the neglect of pastoral and other responsibilities. The Sunday-schools grew and flourished; mission stations were started and vigorously maintained. One testifies, "Dr. Parker, Mrs. Parker, and their friends literally went forth

into the back streets, lanes, and courts of the city, preaching the Gospel, and compelling the poor and the degraded to come in. The Sunday schoolroom, larger than most chapels, was filled every Sunday evening with a congregation of the very poorest, to whom laymen ministered in a spirit of Christian sympathy." Nor was this all. Dr. Parker has always held very pronounced ideas in regard to the training of preachers. Lancashire Independent College had been in existence in Manchester since 1842, but evidently in his estimation it left something to be desired. He would be the last to depreciate scholarship, indeed no man pays greater homage to genuine learning than he does ; but Dr. Parker has always held that the first duty of preachers is to preach. A man may be a first-class scholar, but a poor preacher ; on the other hand, the lives of some of the greatest soul-winners show that a man may have little book-learning, and yet be a successful preacher. Consequently Dr. Parker has always felt strongly that the chief aim in ministerial colleges should be, not to produce classical and mathematical scholars, but young men who can handle their mother tongue with effect, who are steeped in the Bible, and who can so proclaim the Word as to arrest and influence people of all classes. Under the impulse of this conviction the minister of Cavendish Street Chapel conducted classes during the week in the schoolroom for the training of preachers. These classes developed into Cavendish College, which in turn became the Congregational Institute for Theological and Missionary Training, now located at Nottingham.

Dr. Parker has made it a rule of his life to devote himself heart and soul to his main work and not to fritter away his energies in a hundred other directions. At Manchester, in consequence of the pressure of his ministerial duties, he was disposed to hold somewhat aloof from the public life of the city, but a speaker of such eloquence and power as he had already become could not be permitted to remain within the confines of his own church and denomination. He was urged to take part in great meetings in the Free Trade Hall and elsewhere, and when he appeared on the platform he was most enthusiastically welcomed. "His sonorous and musical voice," says one referring to this time, "was often felt to be a welcome relief by those who had strained their ears to catch what was said by speakers who had struggled to make themselves heard. So much to the point also was what he had to say, so pithy and so practical, that he was rapidly taking the place, as a moral instructor of a great community, of Hugh Stowell, whose comparatively early death Manchester was then lamenting."

A series of Sunday evening lectures, in which he discussed in an evangelical, temperate, and statesmanlike spirit several important Church questions was so much appreciated by the congregation that at their request and cost the addresses were published and a copy of the book sent to every member of both Houses of Parliament, to many dignitaries of the Church of England, and other distinguished people. In the course of a debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Walpole referred to *Church Questions* as "a most able book, in the Nonconformist view,"

and the *Christian World* spoke of it as "a noble book, full of pith and power." Thus Joseph Parker at thirty years of age had made a name and place for himself, alike as preacher, platform speaker, and author. His next book, *Hidden Springs*, appeared two years later. Consisting of sermons delivered in Cavendish Chapel, a collection of brief sermonettes characteristically headed "Telegrams," and a few prayers, the book was affectionately inscribed "in remembrance of much happy fellowship in the Gospel and in token of increasing fraternal attachment," to "My friends and fellow-labourers, the deacons of Cavendish Chapel, Manchester." The publication of Dr. Parker's sermons had thus commenced, and from this time onward he has continued to address a world-wide congregation through the medium of the printed page. In 1865 he published *Wednesday Evenings at Cavendish Chapel*. But our author was soon to surpass all his previous literary achievements.

In 1866 the religious world was much exercised by the publication of Professor Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. The author set himself to trace Christ's "biography from point to point, and accept those conclusions about Him, not which Church doctors or even apostles have sealed with their authority, but which the facts themselves, critically weighed, appear to warrant." The result was a book of great brilliance and power, but which, while praised by some eminent preachers, occasioned great disquietude to many earnest evangelical Christians, Lord Shaftesbury, for instance, declaring that it came from the infernal regions. The next year appeared another

book with the significant title *Ecce Deus*. It was not put forth as a reply to *Ecce Homo*, but claimed to be an examination of the Life and Doctrine of Jesus Christ on independent ground. But the author, in carrying out his aim, subjected *Ecce Homo* to incisive criticism and contested many of the conclusions arrived at in that book. *Ecce Deus* attracted scarcely less attention than the work which provoked it. The book was widely and most favourably reviewed, all writers testifying to the great ability of the unknown writer. As may be imagined, there was a great deal of speculation and discussion as to the identity of the author. He was generally believed to be some eminent Anglican scholar, who for reasons of his own did not choose to reveal himself, and the book was specially extolled in Church of England and Conservative reviews and magazines. When it became known that the author was a young dissenting minister in Manchester there was universal surprise and in some quarters not a little chagrin. But the book remains to this day the most effective reply to Professor Seeley's fascinating work.

This interesting experiment in anonymous publication was followed by another in the next year (1868). *Springdale Abbey: Extracts from the Diaries and Letters of an English Preacher*, greatly puzzled reviewers and critics, who attributed it to one distinguished writer after another. None suspected that Joseph Parker was the author; it was generally supposed that it was written by a clergyman of the Established Church, this idea, indeed, being suggested in the book itself. From the

preface, dated "The Friary, Christmastide, 1867," on, through story and parable, character sketch, anecdote, and satire, the play of sheer whimsicality, and the operation of serious purpose, to the last page, the book charms the reader. Dean Alford was one of many who spoke highly of it.

All this time Mr. Parker's position at Manchester had been consolidating, and his influence extending year by year. The church was realising the best kind of prosperity; all the services were well attended, financial anxiety was unknown, and a most fruitful work was being carried on outside the immediate borders of the church. Unsought honours came to the pastor. As early as 1862 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Chicago University—a distinction enjoyed by few preachers at so early an age as thirty-two. His North of England brethren showed their high appreciation of his personal worth and his services to the denomination by electing him in 1867 to the chair of the Lancashire Congregational Union, and again two years later by appointing him the first Chairman of the Manchester Congregational Board. His fame naturally spread far beyond his own district and county, and it does not excite very great surprise to find two deacons of a pastorless Congregational Church in the City of London journeying to Manchester with the object of trying to induce the brilliant preacher to transfer his services to the metropolis of the world. But before we go any further we must record an event which exercised great influence upon the whole of Dr. Parker's subsequent life.

VI.

WEDDING BELLS.

ON December 22nd, 1864, Joseph Parker and Emma Jane Common were married at Sunderland. The bride was a daughter of Mr. Andrew Common, J.P., banker, a Nonconformist and Liberal, well-known and highly respected in the North of England. She was born on June 20th, 1846, at Darlington. Soon after her seventh birthday she was sent to Polam Hall, Darlington, a school kept by two Quaker ladies of the name of Procter. The best masters visited the school, and the pupils attended lectures in Darlington. The Misses Procter were very public-spirited women, and John B. Gough used to stay with them on his lecturing tours. When Miss Common had become Mrs. Parker, she, with her husband, visited the great temperance orator at his home in America. The intellectual and artistic gifts that in after life were turned to such excellent account early manifested themselves. As a girl Miss Common read with great eagerness every book she could lay her hands on, Dickens being then, and always remaining, her favourite author. When she was about sixteen years of age she went to Middlethorpe Hall, York, to continue her education. She showed special aptitude for drawing and painting, singing and reciting, and in the acquisition of both

ancient and modern languages. Later she developed no inconsiderable literary faculty, writing stories, sketches, reviews, and poems marked by much grace and sweetness. When Dr. Parker first saw her she was in her seventeenth year. The marriage took place before she was nineteen. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. James Parsons, of York, who had baptized the bride in infancy.

The following racy passage is from a letter written by Mr. John C. Jones, one of the deacons of Cavendish Street Chapel, Manchester:—"With six of my fellow deacons I had the great pleasure of being present at the Congregational Church, Sunderland, when the knot was tied which bound them together for life in the bonds of holy matrimony. We were all very happy and delighted with Mrs. Parker, and I could not help thanking God for such an acquisition as she would be to our church, and our anticipations, high as they were in this respect, were more than fulfilled. She soon won all our hearts and our united love. After the wedding breakfast was over, and the speeches usual on such occasions had been made by the Rev. James Parsons, of York, and other ministers and friends, down to us poor deacons, the happy couple set off on their honeymoon trip in a great shower of rice and old slippers, one of which, if I mistake not, was quietly and ingeniously fastened to the Doctor's coat-button behind. How it was disengaged, I don't know. Be that as it may, the friends at Cavendish Church waited with impatience—especially the ladies—for the day when the happy couple would turn up in Manchester.

During the interval, however, the Church was not idle. The day at length arrived, and our great schoolroom was packed with loving, warm, and generous hearts, and they gave Dr. and Mrs. Parker such a welcome as Lancashire folk only can give. Methinks I can see it all now, and hear the long-continued clapping of hands. Every one was brimful of excitement, enthusiasm and loving joy, and the whole scene produced a profound impression upon my mind which I shall never forget." The Christmas day following their marriage Dr. and Mrs. Parker spent in Canterbury with an old friend of the husband, a Congregational minister, who in all innocence and unconsciousness preached from the text, "Behold the bridegroom cometh."

An extract from an article Mrs. Parker was asked to write on "The Ideal Husband" will indicate the spirit in which she entered upon her married life: "Surely here is one essential in an ideal husband, that he should be capable of recognising the equality of the male and female element in the man whom the Lord created,— 'Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.' . . .

Another thing may well be remembered, and that is that the ideal husband can be greatly helped in his development by the home atmosphere which surrounds him. The ideal man together with the ideal woman must be a home growth. Only by mutual encouragement in all good things will the best results accrue. 'Each in and for the other and God in both' must be their watchword, and with such a rallying-cry, victory over the things which stand

in the way of their perfection is secure." Asked at another time to reply to the query, "What attribute do women like best in a man?" Mrs. Parker answered, "What women desiderate in a man is not an attribute, nor even many attributes, but a sum total of reliable and lovable humanity." She said it might just as reasonably be asked, What physical feature do women prefer in a man—nose or eyes or mouth or what? "Most of us would say, rather give us a blended whole, with no one feature of so heroic a mould as to put its humbler companions to undue shame. Even so with moral qualities, let them be moulded into something human and companionable, and do not let them be appraised singly, like unconnected and uninteresting sticks in the bundle of life."

It will be seen that Dr. Parker was extremely fortunate in winning for his wife one endowed with so many gifts and graces, possessing a particularly bright and happy disposition, eminently tactful and kind-hearted, and not the least of whose many admirable qualities were her clear-sightedness and all-pervading common sense. In Manchester Mrs. Parker rapidly made friends, and soon shared the popularity her husband enjoyed among all classes. Alike in the home and in the Church she proved to be a true helpmeet. Mrs. Parker once described to the writer how she learned shorthand from her husband. During their walks he would hold up a finger at a certain angle and tell her the consonant it represented in Phonography; then he would bend the finger to indicate a hooked letter. So facile a learner as Mrs. Parker quickly acquired

the stenographic art, taking short cuts that slower students dare not attempt, and in time she was able to write as fast as her husband spoke from the pulpit. "Specially reported by Mrs. Parker" was the intimation that frequently appeared after Dr. Parker's sermons in one of the periodicals he edited when they came to London. If Mrs. Parker was an invaluable "co-pastor" in Manchester, she proved a still greater treasure in London, where she helped to sustain her husband in times of severe trial and bitter disappointment, and, when the time came, filled the important position of wife of the minister of London's "Nonconformist cathedral" with becoming dignity and grace.

VII.

THE POULTRY CHAPEL.

THE Church which had set its heart upon Dr. Parker was no mean or insignificant one. The oldest Congregational Church in the City of London, it had a glorious history stretching back to the early part of the seventeenth century. Its founder and first pastor was the Rev. Thomas Goodwin, D.D., one of the most learned men of his day, Preacher to the Council of State, member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, some time President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. Born on October 5th, 1600, Dr. Goodwin, after a most active and honourable career, in the course of which he rendered inestimable service alike to the cause of true religion and the best interests of the State, died on February 23rd, 1679 in Cripplegate, within a short distance of where the City Temple now stands, and was buried in Bunhill-fields. Examining the records of the past, one is almost startled to note the many points of resemblance between the first and the latest pastors of the church which first met in an ordinary dwelling-house near the Tower of London and now worships in the palatial building on Holborn Viaduct. Separated by some two hundred years, both men are built on a large and noble

scale, being intellectual giants, outstanding figures in their day and generation, touching life at many points, men of affairs and far-reaching influence ; specially famed for their sagacity, courage, independence, and all the qualities that constitute strong, fearless manhood ; champions of liberty in State and Church ; hating all things small and mean and narrow. Both stand out pre-eminently as proclaimers of the Word, and as the most popular preachers of their day. Wherever Goodwin preached, whether in the obscure meeting-house, or in St. Paul's Cathedral, or in Westminster Abbey, large congregations flocked to hear him, as they do to the City Temple to hear Dr. Parker to-day. So partial was the House of Commons to Goodwin's preaching that the Members never missed an opportunity of inviting him to appear before them, and they invariably passed a resolution thanking him for the "great pains" he took with his sermon and requesting him to print it. What is said of Goodwin in his epitaph may with peculiar appropriateness be said of his present successor : "None ever entered deeper into the mysteries of the Gospel, or more clearly unfolded them for the benefit of others." How admirably Dr. Parker maintains the noble traditions of the ancient church !

The Church first met in Anchor-lane, Thames Street ; thence removed in 1672 to Paved Alley, Lime-street ; thence, in 1755, to Miles' Lane ; thence in 1766 to Camomile-street ; thence in 1819 to the Poultry, Cheapside. After Goodwin came a succession of godly and learned men, including the

Rev. Robert Bragge (pastor, 1698-1738), who married a daughter of John Strudwick, at whose house on Snow-hill John Bunyan died (the four lie in the same vault in Bunhill-fields); the Rev. John Reynolds, who served the Church for thirty years (1774-1803); the Rev. John Clayton, M.A., during whose ministry of forty-three years (1805-48) the Poultry Chapel was built, £2,000 being paid for the site, the total cost amounting to £10,000; the Rev. S. Bergne, who, after a pastorate of seven years (1848-54) became one of the secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society; the Rev. Thomas Spence, D.D., who ministered to the Church for thirteen years (1854-67), and was Dr. Parker's immediate predecessor. In consequence of the migration of people to the suburbs, Dr. Spence, during his pastorate, found it increasingly difficult to gather a congregation in the City, and when his resignation took effect in October, 1867, the Church had dwindled to a mere handful.

A new and glorious era in the history of the ancient Church was about to dawn. But first many difficulties had to be overcome, much patient waiting was demanded, and all the varied powers of a new and commanding personality had to be exerted before the former glory of the church could be restored and augmented. People are, not unnaturally, apt to think of this City church only in relation to Dr. Parker's career, but the history and preservation of an institution with so noble a record ought not to be a matter of indifference to Christians generally. The fact is that to all human seeming but for Dr. Parker's advent the church founded by

Goodwin in 1640 would have come to an inglorious end. The steady drift of the population, especially the wealthier portion, to the environs, made the maintenance in vigour and efficiency of a voluntary church in the heart of the City possible only under the direction of a very powerful and magnetic personality. Before Dr. Parker accepted the pastorate a crisis had been reached which was forcing the few remaining faithful adherents to contemplate the unpleasant possibility of their extinction as a separate religious society.

Some years prior to the resignation of Dr. Spence the executive of Poultry Chapel had been authorised by the church to sell the property, with the view of building a more commodious structure in a better position. On the Sunday following Dr. Spence's farewell Mr. Eusebius Smith, the senior deacon and treasurer of the Poultry Chapel, accompanied by a fellow deacon, paid the visit to Cavendish Chapel already alluded to, and on the Tuesday (October 22nd, 1867) waited upon the minister and invited him to settle in the City of London. The few appearances Dr. Parker had made on London platforms whilst minister at Manchester—notably when he lectured at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on Church and State in 1862, in connection with the Bicentenary of the ejected ministers—had made a very marked impression and excited not a little interest in his personality and future. The discernment of the Poultry Chapel people in trying to induce so brilliant and successful a man to take in hand their precarious cause was only equalled by their audacity. Mr. Smith and his colleague laid

before Dr. Parker a scheme for selling the Poultry Chapel and erecting a large and attractive building on a commanding site. The value of the land on which the Chapel was built in 1819 had enormously increased, and it was estimated that there would be a large sum available for the purpose in view.

Before giving the deputation a definite answer Dr. Parker communicated with his deacons. They lost no time in taking counsel together, and on November 7th, 1867, presented him with a document signed by every deacon which is significant of his hold upon their affection and gratitude. They referred to "the truly honourable and straightforward manner" in which Dr. Parker had received the London deputation, "and the Christian candour and delicacy with which he replied to them." Whilst congratulating him upon the honour implied, they pointed to "the position which you now occupy in the North of England, the great and daily increasing influence you exercise in the denomination, the great want which is now felt of those high qualities which you so pre-eminently possess," and the work he was doing at Cavendish Chapel, as reasons for declining the invitation. The deacons went on to say that they would regard their pastor's removal from Manchester "as a calamity to the church and to the denomination," and closed with the most affectionate expressions of personal feeling towards both Dr. and Mrs. Parker. At a church meeting that followed, the substance of this remarkable memorial was put into the form of a resolution and carried with enthusiasm and unanimity.

In order to acquaint himself with the position of

affairs Dr. Parker went up to London to preach in the Poultry Chapel and make observations and inquiries, with the result that, returning to Manchester, he declined the invitation on March 11th, 1868. The Manchester people were delighted when their pastor announced his decision, and three months later on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his ministry at Cavendish Chapel, presented him, at a meeting of the church and congregation, with an address expressing high appreciation of his ministry and their strong attachment to him, which was "greatly enhanced by the noble and Christian course adopted by him when invited to the pastorate of the church" in London. As a substantial token of their gratitude they begged his acceptance of a purse containing seven hundred guineas. In the course of the speech in which Dr. Parker acknowledged this gift he made a frank and definite statement. He asked that there might be no misunderstanding in connection with his acceptance of the gift. If he was meant to regard it as a "detainer" or as in any way binding him for the future, he must refuse it; his acceptance was on the distinct understanding that he was at perfect liberty to leave Manchester the next day if it seemed right to him to do so. Subsequent events proved that this was one of several instances in which Dr. Parker's sagacity, foresight, and caution, helped him to pass with honour through a very trying ordeal.

Disappointed in their hopes, the deacons of the Poultry Chapel made every effort to find a suitable leader of the movement they contemplated. They

secured the most influential pulpit supplies, including the Rev. Thomas Binney, "the Nonconformist bishop of London," and the Rev. Samuel Martin, of Westminster, and approached one minister after another with a view to a permanent settlement ; but the pastorate remained vacant. At the end of fifteen weary months they turned as a last resource once more to Dr. Parker, and invited him to reconsider his previous decision. Their failure in other directions and their conviction that the finger of God pointed to him, together with their offer to sell the Poultry Chapel at the earliest possible moment, and put up a larger and more suitable building on a better site, could not but impress Dr. Parker. He came to the conclusion that he could no longer remain deaf to a call which came to him with such remarkable emphasis, urgency, and unanimity. He privately consulted his most intimate friends in Manchester, including the principal subscribers of the testimonial, and the consensus of opinion was that he had no alternative but to yield to the renewed appeal.

He also took counsel with some of the leaders of the denomination. James Parsons and Robert Halley strongly advised him to accept the invitation, the latter suggesting that a young man might do amongst the Congregationalists some such work as Mr. Spurgeon had done amongst the Baptists. This idea rather alarmed Dr. Parker than otherwise, "for," he says, "I remember how great a fight Mr. Spurgeon had to go through before he conquered his unparalleled position." Mr. Binney reviewed the case judicially in a lengthy, elaborate letter, but said Dr. Parker alone could speak the final word, Dr.

Spence, who, as the last minister of the Poultry, knew better than anybody else the difficulties of the position, considered there would be great risk in leaving Manchester ; he said, " Even Spurgeon himself cannot hinder young men from going out of London on Sundays." Afterwards, however, when he had heard Dr. Parker preach a missionary sermon in Westminster Chapel, Dr. Spence said, " There cannot be a shadow of a doubt as to the success of your ministry in the City of London," and he came to regard the Thursday morning service as " clearly an inspiration from heaven." Had Dr. Parker chosen the easier and pleasanter path he would undoubtedly have remained in Manchester, where he had practically everything that heart could desire. In coming to London he exchanged a certainty for an uncertainty, knowing full well that the attempt to carry out the avowed intention of the Poultry Church to sell the property and erect another building would involve an enormous amount of hard work, worry, and risk. But Dr. Parker was never daunted by either existing difficulties or disagreeable possibilities ; the story of his life is one long record of successful struggle against opposition of all kinds, and the City Temple itself is a monument of his invincible courage and supreme ability.

Dr. Parker preached his farewell sermon in Cavendish Street Chapel in June, 1869, and commenced his ministry in London on the 19th of September following, being then in his fortieth year. The contrast between the large and handsome building, the band of wealthy supporters, and the congregation of two thousand people he had left in

Manchester, and the dingy, out-of-the-way structure, with only a handful of people associated with it, to which he had come, was only too evident alike to the preacher and his friends. Dr. Parker, however, was not overcome by the depressing environment, as most men would have been. In his first utterances in his new sphere he struck a lofty note of courage, hopefulness, and confidence in God. The very first sentence of his first prayer as minister of the Poultry Chapel is significant: "Almighty God, thou directest the steps of men according to a counsel which we cannot understand." The text of the sermon was: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight" (Isaiah xlv. 2). Looking back through more than thirty years to that memorable Sunday morning, the preacher and all associated with him must have a vivid sense of how wonderfully that promise has been kept in their case. The first words of the sermon were, "Man must go. It is not a question whether we will go or not go; that is determined for us—we *must* go . . . The only question is *how*? Man may go either with God or without him." And so the idea of Divine ordination, direction, and support was developed, to the comfort of the preacher certainly not less than the hearers. We are fortunate in being able to give Dr. Parker's inaugural words on this historic occasion. In view of all that has happened since, they are intensely interesting and remarkable, showing how acute was his prevision, how closely his anticipations have been fulfilled, and how completely his plans and proposals have been carried out. At the conclusion of the sermon Dr. Parker said:—

"I have been preaching to myself this morning. . . . There are some people who do not hesitate to say that in coming to this place I have voluntarily come into a very crooked place. . . . There are, however, two ways of looking at that. If I were starting life as a minister, I should say, 'Do not put me down in a church that is full . . . put me rather in a place that is quite empty, but around which there are plenty of people.' In coming to this place, in exchanging a position that need not be described to those who know anything of English Independency, for this place, I did not look exclusively on what may be called the ordinary work of the ministry; I have ventured to look at London itself, that great and immeasurable 'centre without a circumference'; I have ventured to look on young men, on strangers, on poor forlorn castaways, that would be glad to hear a word of Divine hope. I have thought of all these; and what if God should give me somewhat of result out of these? . . . It is said that 'there is nobody in the City on Sunday.' If there is 'nobody' in the City on Sundays, I believe there are a good many persons in the City on Thursdays, and that is the day on which I intend to exercise my ministry in this place. . . . This may be a dream—I believe it may become a fact. . . . I believe in printing . . . so we shall publish on Thursday a revised report of what proceeds here on Sunday morning or some other occasion, for one penny. . . . So you see we purpose something; and although I have spoken about these purposes in this definite manner, I beg you to understand that I am speaking about them in my own heart with fear and trembling and self-misgiving, yet with a determination that we will at least endeavour, by God's blessing, to deserve well. . . . And now, what is it we wait for, but for the Leader of our souls,

and the Saviour of our life? 'Jesus, still lead on.' And if He lead, every opposing force shall be crushed by His great power. This is my opening word ; may it be made rich with many blessings."

When Dr. Parker commenced his London ministry, he had practically everything against him, and nothing in his favour except what his own personality supplied. The Poultry Chapel was not only in the centre of a city which was supposed to be completely deserted on Sundays, but it was hidden away up an obscure court and was itself an unprepossessing building. Further, never before or since did the pulpits of London present so splendid an array of preachers as C. H. Spurgeon, Canon Liddon, Dean Vaughan, Morley Punshon, Thomas Binney, Donald Fraser, Henry Allon, John Clifford, Baldwin Brown, Alexander Raleigh. But the new-comer soon made his influence felt. From the first the Poultry Chapel was thronged both on Sundays and Thursdays. Within a few weeks we find Dr. Parker writing : " We have much reason to be encouraged in our work. We labour under no little disadvantage in consequence of the peculiar construction of the Poultry Chapel ; both the principal entrances are on the same side, and when they are blocked up by waiting strangers, two difficulties arise : (1) The stated seatholders find it almost impossible to get to their seats ; and (2) visitors who come later turn back under the impression that the chapel is crowded." Urged to repeat the Thursday service at another hour, Dr. Parker wisely declined, on the ground that it would lead to divided interest and divided vigour. He goes on to say, " There is but

one thing wanted to complete our assurance that God is with us ; without that one thing no ministry can be world-wide in its range or long-enduring in its influence. That one thing is *persecution*. We have been waiting for this. We must be wrong somewhere, or it would have come before now." Dr. Parker had not long to wait before he had this peculiar evidence of the Divine favour. At this time, however, everything was going smoothly. His sermons within two months had attained a sale of 4,000 copies weekly. So many requests to preach and lecture poured in upon him that he issued the following humorous notice :—

"As an arrangement for self-protection, I am driven to announce the following as my charges for general public service ; in all cases travelling expenses must, of course, be paid :—

Preaching on behalf of the salaries of poor ministers—
Nothing.

Preaching for ministers whose salaries are less than
£100 a year—Nothing.

Preaching at the opening of chapels—Six Volumes of
Standard Literature.

Attending Tea-meetings—Fifty pounds.

Going to Bazaars—A hundred guineas.

Serving on Committees—Two thousand pounds.

On 25th November, 1869, he writes : "To-day we have had the intense joy of addressing a noble throng of attentive hearers, and we cannot but hope that deep impressions have been made on many hearts. May the Almighty Spirit, True and Holy, the Unseen, but All-seeing Ghost, carry on His work increasingly in our midst !" He is encouraged by a

note from a clergyman of the Established Church thanking him for his "refreshing and edifying discourse," and assuring him of the prayers of a brother in the Lord for a rich blessing upon his labours.

Deploring the want of commonsense in many men, Dr. Parker says, "We are repeatedly asked to preach from home on *Sundays*. Just beginning a new ministerial era, called to a position of no ordinary difficulty, we are respectfully requested to go a hundred miles into the country to preach charity sermons! At the risk of appearing to depreciate the honour, we must say that the unreasonableness of the request, considering the speciality of the circumstances, is to us quite inexplicable."

Dr. Parker is pre-eminently a preacher to preachers. Probably his sermons have been listened to by a larger proportion of ministers and theological students than those of any other preacher of the past century. At Manchester, as has been narrated, he did valuable work in helping to prepare young men for the ministry, and in London he gave practical evidence of his continued interest in ministerial training. Being unable to accept invitations to visit various colleges and converse with the students respecting their prospective work as preachers and pastors, he suggested a periodical meeting in the City for intercourse upon ministerial and pastoral preparation and service. In May, 1871, it was decided to form an Institute of Homiletics, Dr. Parker's idea being to offer brief remarks upon pulpit work generally, to invite inquiry

and discussion on the part of students, and encourage conversational criticism upon outlines of sermons, composition, pronunciation, reading, and other exercises, to be submitted by students. Ministers and students of all denominations were eligible for membership ; meetings were held on the Monday after the first Sunday in each month ; there were no books to buy and no fees to pay.

The inaugural gathering took place on June 5th, 1871, when thirty-three students from the various colleges attended. After a frank interchange of criticism by the students Dr. Parker summed up in a helpful address. We quote one characteristic little passage—which, it should be remembered, was directed towards those who had criticised others :—" I do not hear so quickly as some men hear ; but I thought I heard in some of the criticisms such pronunciations as the following. Somebody spoke of a very ' analetic mind.' It may be want of sharpness in hearing. The word as I read it is analytic. Did somebody talk about the devisions of sermons ? Ought it to be pronounced so ? Did not one of you say—something*k* ? I was more struck with these little things because of the acidity of the manner in which some of the criticisms were given. It is a dangerous thing to throw stones, because they may be returned. With regard to other little matters I certainly heard one speaker refer to the first 'ed—the first 'ed of the discourse. What is that ? It may be a contraction, for the purpose of saving time." The Institute of Homiletics was carried on until the closing of the Poultry Chapel.

VIII.

CANNON-STREET HOTEL AND EXETER HALL.

When the deacons of the Poultry Chapel approached Dr. Parker the second time it was with the hope and expectation that within a few months of his settlement in London the church property would be sold and a new building be in course of erection. But, to the intense disappointment of Dr. Parker and many others, unexpected difficulties arose. They had to remain for three years in the Poultry Chapel, and a further two years elapsed before the church had another home of its own. The Charity Commissioners stipulated that a new site must be secured before the old one was put up to auction, and that before the transfer was effected arrangements must be made for continuing the services until the new building was ready for use. It was easier to comply with the second than with the first condition. At length the site on which the City Temple now stands was purchased from the Corporation of the City of London for £25,000, the Poultry Chapel, with site, was sold for £50,200 to the London Joint Stock Bank, who still occupy it, and the structure which had done duty for some fifty-three years was closed as a place of worship on Thursday, June 20th, 1872. On that day the noon-day service was held as usual, the final leave-taking

being reserved for the evening, when a public meeting was addressed by Dr. Parker, Mr. Bergne, and others. On the previous Sunday evening Dr. Parker preached from the words, "The door was shut" (Matt. xxv. 10), "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. iii. 8).

After the summer vacation, Dr. Parker resumed his ministry on 15th September, 1872. For the Sunday morning services the Great Hall of Cannon-street Hotel had been hired, and for the Sunday evening services Exeter Hall had been secured, the Thursday noonday service being transferred to Albion Chapel, London Wall, a Presbyterian place of worship long since demolished. One of the severest trials a church and minister can undergo is to be deprived of their accustomed place of worship and to have to meet temporarily in strange buildings. Dr. Parker and his friends were naturally somewhat anxious as to how the closing of the Poultry Chapel would affect the congregations, while the rent of halls and attendant expenses greatly added to their already heavy financial responsibilities. To the surprise of many and the joy of all, on the first Sunday morning the Cannon-street Hall, which accommodates a thousand people, was crowded to overflowing, many people being unable to gain admission. Says the *Christian World* of that week, "Not only was every available space occupied, but numbers thronged the doorways, in situations in which even Dr. Parker's sonorous voice could not be expected to reach them, although he was well heard throughout the place of meeting." The sermon was founded on Philip. i. 12, 19. The

morning service, being held within a few minutes' walk of the old place of assembly, was not in some respects so severe a test as that of the evening, Exeter Hall being about a mile further westward and the auditorium much larger and less comfortable than the Cannon-street Hall. What sort of appearance would Exeter Hall present? The *Christian World* reported that, "With the exception of some of the back seats on the platform, the spacious hall, which accommodates upwards of 3,000, was filled."

Writing of the occasion, Dr. Parker says: "Hitherto grace had been given to me to decline every invitation to appear on this renowned platform, so that I was a stranger, and had nothing to hope from past appearances. Would there be a sprinkling of people upon the middle of the floor? The time came. The hall presented such a sight as I had never beheld from any pulpit, and once more I thanked God with a full heart for His great grace." The text of the evening sermon was Matt. xvi 21—Jesus "began." The preacher urged his hearers to decision on the most momentous of all questions, and to choose a life of Christian self-sacrifice. He sustained the entire service himself. A precentor led the singing, the organ not being used. There was nothing distinctively clerical in Dr. Parker's appearance; he did not wear the Geneva gown, as he does now. He stood up alone, without adventitious support of any kind, and spoke as a man to his fellow creatures, trying to induce them by argument and entreaty, by pathos and humour, wit and satire, and every legitimate means, to join the Christian army. These Sunday evening services in Exeter Hall

constitute one of the most notable chapters in Dr. Parker's career.

For two years Dr. Parker continued to preach on Sundays in the Cannon-street Hall and Exeter Hall, and on Thursdays in Albion Chapel ; that is, until the opening of the City Temple in May, 1874. Meanwhile the erection of the new sanctuary was proceeding. The selection of the site did not escape criticism—has anything that Dr. Parker has been responsible for ? The Viaduct had not long been built, there were no houses upon it, and the situation certainly had a dreary and forbidding look. The minister and his associates were consoled with for being in "that Holborn pit," and all sorts of unpleasant things were prophesied. But in this, as in many other things, time has demonstrated the soundness of Dr. Parker's judgment and justified his courageous policy. Having realised £50,200 by the sale of the Poultry Chapel and site the trustees might have done what other City Nonconformist churches have done—spent part of the money in building a cosy place in a charming suburb, and endowed it with the balance. Although the church since its foundation and through all vicissitudes kept within the boundary of the City, there is nothing in the trust deed binding it to any part of London. But Dr. Parker, as always, chose the more arduous course. It is one thing to build in the City a church comfortably seating 2,500 and capable of holding 3,000 ; it is quite another to draw a congregation in proportion to the size of the building.

Difficulties that could not be avoided, and opposition that might have been withheld, seemed

to dog Dr. Parker's steps from the moment he set foot in London. In view of all that he has gone through it is hardly surprising if he sometimes betrays impatience with unfriendly criticism. As if he had not already enough to do in directing the great enterprise which resulted in the erection of the City Temple, he was called upon to defend himself against a curiously bitter attack. He had asked his Thursday hearers to subscribe £250 for a pulpit for the City Temple; but much to his surprise the Court of Common Council, on the motion of Mr. Deputy Fry, an influential figure in the City, decided by a majority of 25 to present to the City Temple a pulpit of the value of three hundred guineas. The offer was of course gratefully accepted, but immediately there was a tremendous outcry in certain quarters, the burden of which was that by receiving the gift the church would violate the principles of Nonconformity. One religious newspaper made the eminently Christian suggestion that those who had promised subscriptions to the City Temple building fund should withhold them, and urged prospective supporters not to encourage the undertaking by speech or presence. Dr. Parker replied with vigour and sound argument to his assailants; in due course the Corporation presented a beautiful pulpit, which is admired by every visitor, and to-day people find it difficult to understand what all the pother was about.

IX.

THE CITY TEMPLE: MEMORIAL STONE-LAYING.

THE choice of the site on which the City Temple stands was admirably in keeping with the history and testimony of the ancient church, the immediate neighbourhood being peculiarly rich in most hallowed associations. From the front door can be seen Snow-hill, where Bunyan passed away to the City Beautiful. A little farther away is Charterhouse-square, where one windy, rainy December day in 1691 Richard Baxter passed to the Saint's Everlasting Rest. Immediately behind the church there stood the old Fleet prison, where many a faithful servant of the Lord suffered for conscience' sake. A little beyond Snow-hill is Smithfield, where the martyrs went up in chariots of fire. One of them was a girl, whose name is written in letters of gold on the walls of the City Temple. Anne Askew was only nineteen years of age when she was tied to the stake and the faggots piled around her. When the Lord Mayor offered to set her at liberty if she would recant, she replied, "I came not hither to deny my Lord." The torch was applied, and Anne Askew ascended to Heaven. Three hundred and fifty years afterwards a large body of Independents, who cherish the doctrines for which Anne Askew died, were invited by the Lord Mayor of London to

partake of his hospitality at the Mansion House. Having at a public meeting in the City Temple eloquently contrasted the one incident with the other, in substantially the foregoing terms, Dr. Parker significantly added, "It is not Anne Askew that changed."

On Monday, the 19th of May, 1873, the memorial stone of the City Temple was laid by the Rev. Thomas Binney, for many years minister of the Weigh House Chapel, by the Monument, who was then in his seventy-fifth year. The day's proceedings were divided into two parts. At twelve o'clock an immense concourse of people assembled in a large tent erected on the site, and in the afternoon at three o'clock a luncheon was served in the Cannon-street Hotel. Practically all the leading Congregationalists of London and many distinguished representatives of other communions were present either in the morning or the afternoon. Among them (according to a periodical issued at the time by the publishers of this volume) were Revs. Dr. Binney, Dr. Allon, Dr. Raleigh, E. Paxton Hood, Eustace R. Conder, Joshua C. Harrison, Professor Newth, Edward White, T. G. Horton, (father of Dr. R. F. Horton), Cunningham Geikie, Newman Hall, and Valentine Ward (one of Dr. Parker's schoolmasters). The laymen included Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., Mr. Deputy Fry (Chairman of the Holborn Valley Committee, who had laid the foundation stone of the Viaduct), Mr. Deputy Lowman Taylor, Mr. A. J. Shephard, and Mr. Andrew Common. The sister denomination was represented by Dr. Underhill, Chairman of the Baptist Union; the Church of

England by the Rev. Samuel Minton, M.A., and the Presbyterians by Dr. Thain Davidson ; France was represented by the Rev. Th. Marzials, the United States by Mr. A. Humphrey, of Washington, and Australia by Mr. A. Fysh, of Melbourne.

At the commencement of the proceedings in the morning Dr. Parker explained that a site within thirty feet of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church would not have been chosen had it been possible to secure an equally eligible one elsewhere, and that the little difficulty that had arisen in regard to "ancient lights" had been happily adjusted. The Rev. W. Grigsby, of Whitefield Tabernacle, announced the first hymn—Doddridge's "And will the great eternal God On earth establish His abode?" After prayer by Dr. Raleigh, the Rev. Edward Mannering gave out the second hymn, "Christ is our corner stone." Next Mr. James Johnston, junior, honorary secretary—to whom, Dr. Parker said, the Church was under the deepest obligation, not only for the largest subscription on the Congregational list, but for indefatigable, most devoted service—read a list of ladies who, by means of collecting cards, had raised £637, Mrs. Parker securing £88, and Mrs. Barker, who had suggested the collection, £77. Mr. Deputy Fry having presented a silver trowel to Dr. Binney, the patriarch first deposited in a cavity of the stone a bottle containing a copy of the *Times* and of the *City Press* and a document inscribed as follows :—
"The memorial stone of this building to be known as the City Temple (Congregational Church) Holborn Viaduct, London, was laid on Monday, 19th of May, 1873, by the Rev. Thomas Binney, LL.D.

(Signed) Joseph Parker, D.D., Minister. Executive committee: Elihu Bates (treasurer), William P. Nichols, Ebenezer Harrison, deacons; Henry Hughes, James Roberton, W. R. Marsh, George Nettleship, Edward Charles Adams, Charles James Jones, Abraham Smith; James Johnston, jun., hon. secretary." Then Dr. Binney well and truly laid the stone amid a scene of great enthusiasm. During this part of the ceremony a gleam of sunshine broke through the clouds—a happy portent that has been amply fulfilled. The dedicatory prayer was offered by Dr. Allon, and the Rev. R. M. Davies, Oldham, gave out the third hymn, "This stone to Thee in faith we lay."

Then came a very important and even critical part of the programme. The man in whom the interest of the day centred was of course the minister of the beautiful temple in course of erection. Upon him rested an enormous load of care, immediate and prospective; it remained to be seen whether he was equal to sustaining in a worthy manner the responsibilities he had assumed. How would he acquit himself on that day of days? It is not difficult to imagine how intense was the interest taken in his every word and movement. A deliverance worthy of the occasion was looked for, and let it be said at once that the high expectations that had been formed were not disappointed. Dr. Parker came through the trying ordeal with flying colours. Perfectly calm and self-possessed throughout the day, he showed himself then, as always, a consummate master of ceremonies, as well as an orator of the first order. His address running to some three

thousand words, was marked by a degree of tact, grace, catholicity, and high spiritual feeling that he has never surpassed. Having said that he proposed to treat the occasion domestically, he first thanked God for the favours of a lifetime which had that day culminated in a manner that filled him with astonishment and hallowed delight, and then gratefully acknowledged the presence of the assembled fathers and brethren in Christ Jesus. He touched on the resolve of the Church to remain in the City, and seek a constituency among young men, house-keepers, travellers, strangers, and poor people who could not afford to go into the suburbs ; and its decision not to hide in a back street but to occupy a conspicuous position, putting "our trust in the might and love of God."

Protesting his adhesion to "those vital and glorious doctrines, which are commonly known amongst us as Evangelical," he said that the more he looked into them the more assured was he of their scriptural soundness and their adaptation to all men, in all lands, throughout all time. "This is my testimony, as a sinner saved by grace, and what I have known and felt and handled of the Word of Life myself I shall lovingly and energetically declare to all who may come within the influence of my ministry." How faithfully Dr. Parker has kept his pledge is known to those who have had the privilege of attending his ministry in the City Temple. Having dilated in noble language upon the great Evangelical doctrines, and expressed his belief in the permanence of the institution of preaching, he went on to promise that the City

Temple would show the most ungrudging hospitality to all sister churches and all Christian societies enjoying public confidence. "It is not our private ground; it is our Father's house . . . it is in my heart to make the pulpit of the City Temple a terror to evildoers, a tower of strength to all who are honest and pure, and a light to all who are asking the way to the truth and love of God." The eloquent speech closed with an aspiration embodying all that had gone before, and praying God "to bless us all with the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

At the conclusion of Dr. Parker's address, Mr. Harrison gave out the fourth hymn, "Stand up, stand up, for Jesus," and after this had been sung, Mr. Newman Hall, who spoke of himself as being engaged in a kindred work, delivered an earnest brotherly speech. Among those who wrote regretting inability to be present were Dr. Stoughton, Mr. Edward Baines, M.P., Mr. W. R. Spicer, who sent a donation of £50, and Mr. David Thomas, who remarked, "Few men in the history of the world have had opened up to them such a sphere of usefulness as that on which you are entering. Long may you live faithfully to occupy it!" The Doxology having been sung, the venerable Dr. John Macfarlane, of Trinity Chapel, Clapham, offered the final prayer.

About three hundred sat down to the cold collation in the Cannon-street Hotel. Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., who, as soon as Dr. Parker came to London, proved himself one of his staunchest friends, presided. It being considered that the custom of drinking toasts was more honoured in the breach than in the observance, the company showed

its loyalty by singing the National Anthem. The Chairman uttered a hearty Godspeed to the enterprise which had brought them together, and expressed his thankfulness that Dr. Parker and the church were keeping within the City. Incidentally he remarked, "It is not a slight influence that would alter Dr. Parker's intention, for he is a man who chooses to think for himself, and to act in accordance with the dictates of his conscience." In proof that the City was not wholly deserted on Sundays he mentioned that out of three hundred employed in his own house of business, over one hundred lived there continually, and it was the same in other houses. Mr. Conder rejoiced that the old flag of Nonconformity was to be nailed to so respectable a mast in one of the main entrances of the City, and he trusted it would fly there until it was taken down for another flag that would float over all the other churches alike. Mr. Thain Davidson said he looked upon Dr. Parker as the *Ward Beecher* of the English Pulpit. Mr. Minton delivered a most fraternal, catholic, and courageous speech, which was enthusiastically applauded. He regretted that he was the only minister of the Established Church in the company. With all his heart he said to his Nonconformist friends there assembled, "For my brethren's and companions' sake I will seek to do thee good; yea, for the sake of the Lord my God I will wish thee prosperity." Mr. Henry Wright, as one who was born very near the City of London and had had much to do with its commerce, and Mr. W. Willans, another City man, expressed hearty sympathy with Dr. Parker.

The speech of the afternoon was that of Dr. Binney, who then occupied in the denomination a position somewhat analagous to that of Dr. Parker to-day. When the "old man eloquent" stood up to speak, the assembly rose to do him honour. He said Dr. Parker was a fellow countryman of his, and in Northumbrians there was generally the raw material of power. There was a great deal of power in Dr. Parker, but as he had not been so long under the soft, sweetening influences of the South, sometimes there had been sayings and doings which had a little struck upon his ears; but he felt such confidence in the man, such a belief in his principles and worth, his earnestness, sincerity, and truthfulness, and in the power that God had conferred upon him, out of which would come mighty issues, that he felt inclined to take his stand by his side. Dr. Binney concluded by expressing his brotherly interest in Dr. Parker's effort and his hope that God's blessing would rest upon his labours. A pathetic interest attaches to Dr. Binney's share in the day's proceedings: the laying of the memorial stone was almost his last public act, for he died early in the following year.

The next speaker was the Rev. David Thomas, who dwelt on the great blessing and safeguard the City Temple would be (as it undoubtedly has proved) to young people coming up to London from the country. The Rev. G. W. Conder added his congratulations on the event of the day. After a few words from Mr. Marzialls, Mr. White testified to his great and growing respect for Dr. Parker's honesty of character, especially in its application to

Biblical exposition ; he appeared to be possessed by an overpowering desire to know the meaning of God's word, and to spread abroad that knowledge. Dr. Underhill, rejoiced that from the City Temple pulpit there would go forth no uncertain voice as to the great and solemn truths essential to the salvation of men and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The final speech was delivered by Dr. Parker. He rejoiced that they had had Mr. Binney, a king of men, to lay the memorial stone—

“ 'Tis a rich rough gem, deny it who can,
The heart of a true Northumbrian.”

Dr. Parker warmly thanked the friends connected with the late Poultry Chapel for their liberal assistance and also the gentlemen who had taken part in the day's proceedings. He felt stronger and younger for the speeches. He had mentioned at the stone-laying that if that day £3,000 could be raised, clear of all expenses, their anxieties would be at an end, and he now explained that but for the large expense they were put to week by week in respect of places of meeting no appeal would have been necessary. The Chairman generously offered £200 towards the £3,000, and, endorsing a suggestion made by Mr. Willans, urged the ladies who had been so successful in raising money to call upon business men in the City. Thus the proceedings came to an end. Amply has the bright promise of this auspicious day been fulfilled.

X.

THE CITY TEMPLE : OPENING.

WHILE the walls of the City Temple were rising Dr. Parker continued to preach in the temporary meeting-places of the Church. The burden of his prayers at this time was, "If Thy presence go not with us carry us not up hence." In the summer of 1873 he went as a delegate to the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in New York, and, with Mrs. Parker, visited Niagara, Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec. "For his people's sake" Dr. Parker refused many invitations to preach and lecture, but he twice occupied Mr. Beecher's pulpit in Brooklyn, and also preached in the great Wesleyan chapel at Montreal. Writing to his Church from Montreal Dr. Parker said he wished the new pulpit was ready for occupation and that he was giving out the first hymn to be sung in the City Temple. In accordance with Dr. Parker's request his Church assembled in Milton-street schoolroom one Thursday evening in September, 1873, and sang the doxology at the same moment that it was being sung by a congregation in America. A message—"Most successful and enthusiastic meeting; friends send best wishes"—was cabled to the pastor, and followed by a letter expressing the hope of the Church that he would

derive much happiness from his trip, and assuring him that his congregation were looking anxiously forward to his return. Before Dr. Parker left New York for home he preached to a congregation of four thousand people, including bishops, soldiers, merchants, and citizens of every degree ; in the course of the service he took occasion to refer to the Queen of England, and instantaneously the whole congregation greeted her name with most cordial applause. Dr. and Mrs. Parker thoroughly enjoyed their visit to America, and brought back with them many happy impressions of that country and a clearer conception of the far-reaching influence of a ministry exercised in the heart of London.

Resuming his ministry on Sunday, October 26th, Dr. Parker was greeted by overflowing and enthusiastic congregations, both at Cannon-street and Exeter Hall. His morning text was "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Psalm cvii. 30). In the course of his pastoral greeting he said that much as he admired many things he had seen in America, and tempting as were the opportunities for service, he was still of opinion that London offered the finest sphere in the world for ministerial usefulness.

In the evening Dr. Parker, having announced as his text, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in" (Psalm cxxi. 8), again referred to his visit to America, saying that it formed one of the brightest recollections of his life. A few sentences from his speech will show how deeply he had been impressed : "England is a magnificent country, but America has a still more magnificent future . . . I was delighted

with what I saw of the American ministers, particularly with their union, simplicity, and heartiness. I was much struck with the religiousness of the American people." Having spoken of the spirit of brotherhood that prevailed at the Evangelical Alliance meetings, he added: "For my own part my decision is taken, a decision to seek out lines of sympathy and union, rather than to magnify points of antagonism and alienation. When our new church, the City Temple, is ready for occupation I trust we shall secure the services of eminent ministers of the English Episcopal Church. With what joy would we hail the appearance of the Dean of Westminster in our pulpit, or Dr. Vaughan, of the Temple, or the Dean of Canterbury, or any men of the same character and standing! And what would be the special ground of our joy? The thought that at last a great barrier had been broken down, and that brethren long separated had found one another in their Father's house." Fresh from preaching in Methodist Episcopal churches in America, Dr. Parker added: "I cannot but hope and believe that in less than seven years I shall preach in Westminster Abbey or in St. Paul's Cathedral. And what would I preach in those churches of immortal renown? Nothing but salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, God the Son."

The Sunday services were followed by a welcome meeting on the Thursday evening in the Cannon-street Hotel, when a resolution was passed strongly recommending the Trustees of the City Temple to recognise the value of such generous hospitality as

had been shown to Dr. Parker in the United States and Canada by setting apart "one of the best pews of the new church" for the accommodation of visitors from those great countries. The spirit and motive of the resolution were admirable, but probably at no single service in the City Temple would "one" pew hold all the visitors from across the Atlantic ; for not a Sunday or Thursday passes without the presence of numerous friends from the United States and the Colonies, to say nothing of other countries. Said an American visitor one Sunday, "I could have made up a quorum of the New York Presbytery in the City Temple this morning."

The next important stage in the history alike of Dr. Parker and the church was the dedication and opening of the City Temple as a place of worship. This happy event took place on Tuesday morning, 19th May, 1874—exactly one year after the laying of the memorial stone. Twelve noon was the time appointed for the commencement of the service, but long before that hour the building was crowded in every part. It had been announced that the Lord Mayor would attend in state—an unprecedented event in connection with a Nonconformist church in the City of London. Punctually at noon the civic procession appeared, consisting of the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, the sword-bearer, the mace-bearer, and marshal, Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Wheatham and Mrs. Wheatham, Mr. McGeorge, C.C., Deputy Fry, Deputy Sewell, and Mr. Benjamin Scott, City Chamberlain. The City sword having been placed on a gilt bracket, and the representatives of the Corporation seated, the first service in the

City Temple commenced. Dr. Parker had prepared a beautiful and impressive liturgy for the occasion, printed copies being distributed among the assembly. A choir led by Mr. Edwin Moss occupied the organ gallery and led the singing.

The service commenced by the Rev. T. Aveling giving out the chant, "Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord"; then followed the hymn sung at the memorial stone-laying, "And will the great eternal God On earth establish His abode?" The Lord's Prayer was recited by Mr. Aveling and repeated by the congregation; after which came the Scripture-reading, and the sanctus, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts." Then followed a responsive reading by Dr. Parker and the congregation, in which ascriptions of praise were rendered to the Divine Majesty, sinners were exhorted to repentance, blessings were invoked upon all Christian churches and ministers, upon the Queen and the Royal Family, upon all Counsellors, Judges, and Magistrates, "especially the chief magistrate of this City now before Thee," upon all honest labour and commerce, and upon divers classes of people. The *Te deum Laudamus* having been sung, the Rev. G. W. Conder read selected passages of Scripture and offered the dedicatory prayer, after which the whole congregation rose and sang, "O Lord my God, hear Thou the prayer Thy servant prayeth, have Thou respect unto his prayer; hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling place, and when Thou hearest, Lord, forgive."

The first sermon in the City Temple was preached by the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Alexander, of

Edinburgh, from the text, "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). In the course of his sermon the preacher expressed his confidence that the great truths commonly believed among Congregationalists would be preached from that pulpit, congratulated the pastor and people on their beautiful house of worship, and wished them abundant success in the future. After a collection for the building fund had been taken, Dr. Parker said he was gratified that Dr. Alexander had not pointed them to any side rill or pool of man's making but had directed them to the one fountain, the eternal spring, which was offered to them in Jesus Christ. The Rev. Joshua C. Harrison gave out the hymn, "Light up this house with glory, Lord," and afterwards closed the service with prayer.

The luncheon that followed in the Cannon-street Hotel was made memorable by the presence and speech of the Very Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster. The Lord Mayor presided, and the guests included the City Chamberlain, Sir John Bennett, Mr. Deputy Fry, the Rev. S. Minton, Dr. Stoughton, Dr. David Thomas, Dr. John Kennedy, Rev. J. C. Harrison, Rev. T. W. Aveling, and Mr. John Rylands of Manchester. The Lord Mayor having proposed the loyal toasts, Mr. Deputy Fry gave "The Contributors." Mr. Rylands in responding spoke of his eleven years happy association with Dr. Parker, in Manchester, and to his gift of £500 for the library added another £100. The Lord Mayor commended Mr. Rylands' example as worthy of imitation, remarking that the City

Temple had peculiar claims on them, and extolling Dr. Parker's courage in not leaving the City. Dr. Kennedy, after recalling the fact that they had that morning prayed for the Catholic Church, proposed the toast of "The Clergy of other Denominations," coupling with it the name of the Dean of Westminster, whom all admired for his manliness and superiority to ecclesiastical prejudices.

Dean Stanley, on rising to respond, was received with enthusiasm. It goes without saying that the speech of the liberal-minded, noble-hearted Dean was a model of dignity and Christian charity. Having alluded to "the differences which inevitably and naturally exist between the various communions," he said there could be no possibility of mistake as to his opinions on the matters which to a certain extent divided them. One characteristically outspoken and courageous sentence was: "It seems to me that being present on an occasion of this kind is not only one of the privileges of a clergyman of the Church of England, but I will go further and say it is his bounden duty." He made an emphatic pronouncement in favour of increased intercourse, friendly feeling, and Christian understanding between Christians of all communions, which, he said, could not fail to benefit ministers of the Church of England or of any other church. Having expressed his hearty wish and prayer for the "concurrent existence of all Christian communions," he explained that he much preferred the word communions to denominations, which latter, he said, was an entirely modern and, grammatically speaking, rather barbarous word. "Surely," the Dean

proceeded, "when a clergyman of the Church of England regards the past history of his country he has no scruple, and can have no scruple, in taking a wide and a just pride in the good words and the good deeds of those Nonconformists who have departed from us. What English clergyman is there who is not proud of being a fellow-countryman of Owen, Baxter, and Bunyan? And I also venture to ask, what Nonconformist is there who is not proud to be a fellow-countryman of Hooper, Chillingworth, Lord Falkland, Bishop Butler, Thomas Arnold, and other well-known names? If this is the feeling we entertain, both of us, towards the dead, what on earth or in heaven is there to prevent us from entertaining the same towards the living?" Dean Stanley's speech was one of many evidences that he was as desirous as Dr. Parker himself of bringing about the legalisation of "interchange of pulpits" between clergymen of the Established Church and Nonconformists. Although he did not succeed in this the Dean was able to show his catholicity by inviting Nonconformists, including Dr. Stoughton, to lecture in the nave of Westminster Abbey.

Dr. Parker was naturally gratified by the Dean's noble words at the luncheon; he declared that if the day had elicited nothing but that speech it would not have been unproductive, and expressed the hope that a time would come when the Dean of Westminster would preach in the City Temple. In the course of his remarks Dr. Parker referred to the liturgical form introduced that morning, and urged that there was nothing in Scripture or in the prin-

ciples of Congregationalism repugnant to the use of such forms when their introduction was deemed advisable. Referring to the new building, he mentioned that there had happily been no loss of life in connection with its erection, and in the matter of financial aid said that London had done least and Manchester most.

In the evening the church was again the scene of an inspiring service. Dr. Stoughton was the preacher, his text being, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews xii. 2), Dr. Parker, Dr. Newth, and the Rev. Clement Dukes taking part in the service. Further special services were held on the following Sunday and Tuesday, the preachers being Dr. Allon, Dr. David Thomas, and Dr. Halley. Dr. Parker preached his first sermon in the City Temple on Thursday, May 21st, 1874. The subject was "The Ark of the Testimony" (Ex. xxv. 21; Rev. xi. 19). He occupied the pulpit at both services on the following Sunday, and thenceforward has continued to exercise his ministry there with increasing power amid many tokens of Divine blessing.

A few particulars may here be given of the structure of the City Temple. The foundations had to be carried to a great depth in the London clay, and in the course of excavation the site of a Roman pottery was disclosed. The freehold site, with incidental expenses, cost £28,000. The contract for the erection of the building was given to Messrs. George Myers & Sons, at a cost of £26,444. Architects' fees, gasfittings, furniture, etc., brought up the total cost to £56,444. Built from the designs of

Messrs. Lockwood and Mason in the Italian style of architecture, with a tower at one end rising to a height of 145 feet, the City Temple has a length of 160 feet and a width of 63 feet within. Seats are provided for 2,500 people, and some hundreds more can be accommodated by the use of camp stools in the aisles, and the steps of the gallery gangways. The floor of the church slopes slightly towards the pulpit, and the pews both in the area and in the gallery are slightly curved, so that the preacher can be well seen from every part of the building. The pulpit is of Caen stone inlaid with coloured marbles; it is inscribed, "The gift of the Corporation of London, An. Dom., 1874." The beautiful pillars and arches at the base of the pulpit are now hidden by a permanent platform, the erection of which was made necessary by the increasing demand of the building for religious gatherings of all kinds. The pastor's library, of the value of £500, was presented by Mr. John Rylands. Sir John Bennett gave the clock, Dr. W. Patton, of New Haven, Connecticut, the Pulpit Bible, and Messrs. Cooper and Holt, the Communion chair. The organ was erected by Messrs. Foster and Andrews, from the specification of Mr. E. J. Hopkins, Mus. Doc., organist to the Honourable Societies of the Inner and Middle Temple, and opened by him on Monday, May 1st, 1876. From that date until March, 1893, Mr. E. Minshall was the organist, his successor being Mr. A. J. Hawkins. The total cost of the City Temple, including site, building, organ, furnishing and lighting, was nearly £70,000. The church opened with a debt of £4,000, which was cleared off within three years.

XI

THE THURSDAY MORNING SERVICE.

DURING his ministry in Manchester Dr. Parker had often felt the importance of attempting to meet the spiritual wants of men engaged in business who could not for good reasons avail themselves of the customary week evening service in connection with their respective places of worship ; and what most deeply impressed him in connection with the invitation to London was the opportunity of holding a mid-week service that should command the attention of the business men of the City. "No conceivable invitation," he has declared, "to undertake merely the ordinary work of the pastorate could have led me to relinquish my position in Manchester. Surrounded by men able to bring unusual resources of every kind to bear upon the projection and execution of the most important enterprises ; placed in the heart of a great county ; working in buildings confessedly the best in the Independent denomination ; and supported by friendships which had been subjected to every test of sincerity during eleven years, the idea of separation could not be otherwise than most painful to me." It was the hope of establishing a noonday service in the middle of the week in the centre of London that determined Dr. Parker to leave a sphere in which it was his

intention to live and die ; and this fact explains the importance he has always attached to this unique institution. How many people have come to London with the benevolent intention of carrying out schemes of one kind or another for the good of the people, only to meet with disillusionment, disappointment, and failure ! Only those who have made the attempt know how difficult it is to make the faintest impression upon the metropolis of the world. London is a hard city to conquer. In drawing and holding for more than thirty years every Thursday morning at twelve o'clock a congregation that frequently exceeds in number a thousand and whose importance in its representative and influential character cannot be gauged, the minister of the City Temple has accomplished a feat unapproached by any other man. Dr. Robertson Nicoll, one of the few men who have a true conception of Dr. Parker's greatness, says it is nothing short of a Divine miracle that a Thursday noonday service should have been maintained so long in the centre of the world's metropolis.

When people sought to dissuade Dr. Parker from leaving Manchester by telling him that the City of London was empty on Sunday, he reminded them that great multitudes were present on weekdays. Even his best friends did not cheer him in anticipation of the experiment of the Thursday morning service. They told him what had become of services of a similar kind conducted by the most eminent Congregationalist ministers in the metropolis, pointing to the sparse attendance at the Ancient Merchants' Lecture intended for the very class Dr. Parker

wished to reach. One of his deacons predicted that he might gather "a handful of old Nonconformists." A leading official of London Congregationalism gave him six months in which to complete and abandon the experiment. Another Congregational minister foretold that in less than two years he would wish himself back in Manchester. Undismayed by these doleful prophecies Dr. Parker, with characteristic promptitude, proceeded to carry out his idea immediately on arriving in London. Some, fearing that the permanent success of the service might be imperilled by commencing it in the obscurity of the Poultry Chapel, would have waited until they could invite City merchants to the more attractive building then being planned. But Dr. Parker has only one time—now—at once. He began the noonday service in the very first week of his London ministry. The attendance on this inaugural occasion was very considerable, and has steadily increased from that day (23rd September, 1869) to this. So anxious were young men in the City to hear Dr. Parker that in many business houses they drew lots as to who should have the opportunity of going.

At one time or another the service has been attended by people of all classes, creeds, and nationalities. From the first Dr. Parker emphasised the fact that the service was absolutely unsectarian. On Sundays a church of the Congregational order meets within the walls of the City Temple; on Thursdays denominationalism is unknown and unrecognised. A very gratifying feature of these noonday gatherings is that they include people of

every degree of social and intellectual status. One can never attend a service without noticing the presence of a number of very poor persons, who may be occupying the same pew as people far removed from them in worldly circumstance. The divinity student and the college professor, the village pastor and the popular preacher, may be seen sitting side by side ; the prosperous merchant and the struggling clerk may share the same hymn-book. The agnostic and the Salvationist rub shoulders. Poor old women and well dressed ladies are always in evidence, but the masculine element greatly predominates. At every service one sees a great many clergymen and ministers of all denominations, who, gathered together, would in themselves form a congregation of which any preacher might be proud, and most of them take written notes of the sermon. More than one man has declared that he goes to hear Dr. Parker out of sheer enjoyment of his noble English and superb elocution, professing not the faintest interest in what is said. Actors, authors, journalists, artists, and other Bohemian folk, who never think of going to church on Sunday, drop in to "hear Parker" at the City Temple on Thursdays. A considerable number of distinguished people are known to have attended the service—a few of them have written their names in the pulpit Bible or visitors' book—but how many have come and gone unrevealed and unrecognised !

Some people who are aware of this weekly meeting do not realise that the service is from beginning to end a purely religious one. Commencing punctually at twelve o'clock and ending at the stroke of one,

the invariable order of service is—hymn, Scripture-reading, prayer, hymn, sermon, collection, solo, announcements, Doxology. The Thursday discourses are of precisely the same kind as those of Sunday. On the weekday the preacher now and then allows himself a little more freedom than on the Sunday, but in the absence of indication an ordinary reader of the sermons would not be able to say whether one was delivered on Sunday or Thursday. When some important public question or event is engaging general attention, Dr. Parker's hearers expect him to make some allusion to it, and occasionally he responds to their desire. For a short time, in order to preserve intact the purely religious character of the service, it was followed by an "Epilogue," in which Dr. Parker commented on some matter of ecclesiastical, social, or political interest. But the strength of the service has ever been along spiritual, evangelical lines, showing that hard-headed business men, not less than hearers generally, appreciate plain Gospel preaching and simple Gospel songs. Of course it is not forgotten that there is in Dr. Parker's preaching a strong intellectual element that appeals to and satisfies robust thoughtful minds, but on Thursdays, as on Sundays, all his faculties are exerted in the direction of expounding and enforcing the evangelical conception of Christianity.

Dean Vaughan, Master of the Temple, went to one of the very earliest noonday services in the Poultry Chapel, and afterwards confessed that he was "immensely struck by the scene and by the sermon." Since then, many notable clergymen of

the Church of England have attended the service. Father Stanton, of St. Albans, Holborn, who ecclesiastically is at the opposite pole to Dr. Parker, is a frequent Thursday hearer ; he recently wrote : " I always listen to Dr. Parker with great pleasure, for I think him always original, instructive, and a large-hearted, large-minded Christian thinker." In the course of a long letter a London Vicar wrote :

" Dear Dr. Parker,—I am a clergyman of the Church of England holding an important living in London, and having a weighty ministry, I often (always as often as I can—though too often hindrances occur) pop in to your Thursday Lecture. And I cannot feel grateful enough to you and to God for all the benefit it does to me. There is no pleasure so great in all the week—and I feel that the good I gain not only benefits my own soul, but indirectly my *congregation*. I always *preach* the better after hearing you ; and since I have heard you, I am conscious that I have never preached so well or with so much of power. I believe the good you are instrumental in doing in this *indirect* way is quite incalculable."

Of the innumerable testimonies to the helpfulness of his ministry that Dr. Parker has received probably he values none more than the following signed by eight members of the Salvation Army :

" 23rd December, 1889.

" Dr. Parker, City Temple.

" Dear Sir,—As frequent attendants of your Thursday services, we are assured you will allow us to express our deep appreciation of the ineffable privileges these services secure for us. We have found your ministrations to be replete with instruction, always

helpful, and much spiritual benefit has accrued to us therefrom. We cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing our admiration for your expansive affection for all who bear the image of Christ, and liberality towards every section of the Church, as well as your detestation of the spirit of monopoly, and the tendency to circumscribe religion to the dogmatism of creeds. That you may be long spared to be a bright and shining light and endowed with all the supports and comforts of the grace of Christ, is the fervent prayer of your grateful hearers.—J. Bedford, Raymond P. Cecil, T. Gornall, R. Robinson, A. Setterington, A. Williams, John Noble, V. Case, Salvationists."

Such testimonies as these—they could be indefinitely multiplied—witness the many-sidedness of Dr. Parker's genius and the catholicity of his spirit.

The following striking letter shows how City men regard the service :

"Sahara Desert, Thursday, March 12th, 1891.

"Dear Dr. Parker,—I send you greetings from the desert. I have gained palm-trees, a deep-blue sky, a balmy air, and have lost my Thursday morning service ; if I had wings I should be with you for an hour this morning. May the Master abundantly bless you ! You don't know how many business men are being influenced for good by your Thursday morning sermons. May not only men bless you, but heaven's benediction ever rest upon you !—Yours sincerely. . . .

"P.S.—I have forwarded you a small box of dates that are grown in this part."

Many interesting visits and incidents have taken place in connection with the midday service. The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, then Rector of

St. Mary's, Bryanston-square, now Dean of Ripon, promised to preach in the City Temple one Thursday morning in 1875, but was inhibited by the Bishop of London. In this dilemma Mr. Fremantle consulted Dean Stanley, who said : "Go to the Bishop and tell him that if he will agree to submit the whole case of Anglicans preaching in Nonconformist pulpits for the opinion of Counsel, you will not go on with your engagement, but that if he has any difficulty in doing this I myself, being my own ordinary, will go and preach in the City Temple in your place." When the morning came the City Temple was crowded from floor to ceiling. Mr. Fremantle was present in the pulpit, but did not preach, Dr. Parker taking the whole service. Some weeks afterwards a meeting on the subject of the interchange of pulpits between Churchmen and Nonconformists was held in the City Temple. Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., presided, and addresses were delivered by Dean Stanley, Mr. Fremantle, Sir Henry Have-lock, and Mr. "Tom" Hughes, representing the Established Church, and by Dr. Parker, Dr. Stoughton, and Dr. Newman Hall on the Nonconformist side.

A precisely similar incident occurred some eleven years later. The late Rev. H. R. Haweis was announced to preach in the City Temple one Thursday morning in 1886, but the Bishop again intervened at the last minute. A second conference followed, in which Churchmen and Nonconformists took part.

On 22nd March, 1877, after Dr. Parker had preached as usual, Mr. W. E. Gladstone delivered a notable address on the subject of preaching.

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF SIGNATURES OF VISITORS IN THE
CITY TEMPLE PULPIT BIBLE.

I value these signatures in every sense,
especially as the enannals of christian work & women.

Joseph Parker.

Frances E. Willard
Apr. 8, 1894.

Date of Mr. Moffat
visit

May 11th
1876

Robert Moffat 1795
(BORN)

Wyladstone
March 22. 1877

Feb 14 1883. Paronina hituniaruk
(CHIEF MALACASY ENVOY)

Feb 15. 1883. H. Spurgeon
Apr 26
1853

Apr 26 1883 Mount Temple

Oct 4, 1850

Alfred

(LORD MAYOR, 1885).

Henry Ward Beecher
July 1. 1886.

James Chalmers. New Guinea.
Isabel Sommers et.

Thama. Chief of the Bamangwato

Bathoen, Chief of the Bangwaketse.

W. C. Willoughby. Philippines. S. Africa.

10 Nov. 1895

W. W. W. 21 Jan 1896

Hall Cairns 12/11/1896

J. M. Jones. Chairman of the Council 1896

H. V. H. 1896

President of National Free Church Council

Apia Monrovia

W. W. Milburn

Laura Ounston Chant

福壽羅

(HIS EXCELLENCY THE
CHINESE AMBASSADOR).

Lo Jing-hui May 24th 1899.

Mr. Martin Tupper attended one of the Thursday services, and at another Mr. Henry George addressed the congregation.

The visits of most of the following, whose autographs are inscribed in the Pulpit Bible, took place on Thursday mornings :—Robert Moffat, 11th May, 1876 ; W. E. Gladstone, 22nd March, 1877 ; Chief Malagasy Envoy, 11th February, 1883 ; C. H. Spurgeon, 15th February, 1883 ; Lord Shaftesbury, 26th April, 1883 ; Lord Mount-Temple, 26th April, 1883 ; Lord Mayor Fowler, 4th October, 1885 ; Henry Ward Beecher, 1st July, 1886 ; Rev. James Chalmers, of New Guinea ; Lady Henry Somerset ; Khama, Chief of the Bamangwato ; Bathoen, Chief of the Bangwaketse ; and Rev. W. C. Willoughby, L.M.S. Missionary to Bechuanaland, 10th November, 1895 ; H. H. Asquith, 21st January, 1896 ; Mr. Hall Caine, 12th March, 1896 ; Rev. J. Morlais Jones, Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1896 ; Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, President of National Free Church Council, 5th October, 1896 ; Dr. Alfred Momerie ; Rev. W. H. Milburn, Blind Chaplain of United States Senate ; Mrs. Ormiston Chant ; Sir Chih Chen Lo Feng-luh, Chinese Ambassador, 21st May, 1899.

The service has been the means of helping many good causes. For several years in succession the boys and girls from the Stockwell Orphanage, founded by C. H. Spurgeon, came and sang to the Thursday congregation, collections being taken on behalf of the funds of the institution. Similar efforts have at different times been made on behalf of the Little Boys' Home, Farningham, the Reedham Asylum for Fatherless

Children, the Haverstock Hill Orphanage, the Caterham School for Ministers' Sons, and other charities. Malagasy envoys, Armenian refugees, converted French priests, and others, who came to this country to plead their cause, have found an open platform in connection with the Thursday morning service. On Thursday morning June 21st, 1888, Mrs. Catherine Booth, Mother of the Salvation Army, made in the City Temple pulpit almost her last public appearance.

At one Thursday service (February 15th, 1883), C. H. Spurgeon preached in the City Temple, Dr. Parker occupying the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in the evening. Dr. Parker's impressions of his visit will be of interest :

"I have had the pleasure of paying a visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle and preaching in that huge structure such words as were given to me. I cannot let an event of that kind pass without saying how thankful I am for my own sake that it has transpired. No more cordial and sympathetic reception could have been given to any minister of Christ by all who take a leading part in the affairs of the Church. I do not know that I was ever in such a climate during the whole course of my ministry ; every one seemed to be aflame with sacred zeal and love. For my part I felt it good to be there. It is a wonderful Christian centre, and I am stirred up by its recollection ; and I ask you to make this in like degree a similar centre of influence in the City and in the world."

How much Mr. Spurgeon appreciated Dr. Parker's services to the Orphanage, the following letter shows :

" Westwood, Beulah Hill,

" Upper Norwood, March 8th, 1884.

" Dear Dr. Parker,—Since your kindly service to the Stockwell Orphanage I have been restrained from writing to thank you through being exceedingly unwell. The pain is better now, though it leaves me so weak that to move from chair to chair is quite a feat. I am able to sit up to write, and my first duty is to *thank you*. I do so with all my heart. You have been kindness itself to me. Without solicitation you have aided me in my work with brotherly heartiness. The Great Father reward you for this. I am burdened with a sense of personal unworthiness; but the cause of the orphan is worthy of all service, and I am sure you will have a reward in advocating it. Still, I feel none the less a *personal* gratitude, which I will not attempt to express, except it will be in prayer to God for you, and your church, and your work. The Lord God Almighty bless you.

" What a sermon you gave the people upon the occasion of our orphans' visit! That latter portion about answers to prayer in the Divine sense touched me much. How little do we pray for! Much in words, but so little as to our interpretation of the words! I pray for health—will it only come to me in the higher way? It may be so.

" Yours most gratefully,

" C. H. Spurgeon."

At the 20th anniversary of the service Dr. Parker observed: "I have done nothing in it, I have simply said, 'Lord, speak through me.' I have hardly ever known one sentence I was going to utter, but I knew every thought I wished to explain and to enforce."

The One Thousandth Noonday service was held on Thursday, June 30th, 1892. The occasion was a memorable one. The building was crowded to overflowing, and many leading ministers, including the late Dr. John Pulsford, and laymen, who could not be present, sent letters of congratulation. To commemorate the event a stained glass window was placed in the City Temple at a cost of £150. When resuming the service after the summer holiday on the first Thursday in October, 1900, Dr. Parker remarked that he thought he saw signs that the Thursday morning service "is, by the blessing of God, going to take a new lease of life," and went on to observe that he had never preached upon collisions, earthquakes, great railway accidents, or even general elections. If enlarging congregations, and intenser interest in the utterances and greater devotion to the person of the preacher indicate a new lease of life, then certainly the Thursday service has entered upon it. The vitality of the service is of course explained by the perennial freshness and vigour of its central figure. Dr. Parker seems to have learned the secret of rejuvenation; he is continually renewing his youth and receiving fresh accessions alike of spiritual power and physical health. He has his periods of depression when he talks of giving up his work and hiding himself in some obscure corner until the final summons; but these moods pass away, he attacks his work with added zest, and astonishes himself not less than his friends by launching some new enterprise or undertaking an additional responsibility from which younger and less burdened men would shrink.

XII.

PERSONALIA.

SOMEWHERE towards the end of the seventies, when in my early teens, I was taken to a Sunday morning service at the City Temple, and immediately fell under a spell which has never been broken. Sunday after Sunday, morning and evening, I walked several miles to hear Dr. Parker, and never thought of taking any notice of the weather. Literally, I sat at his feet and all but worshipped him ; every sermon was too short ; his name became woven into the texture of my daily life ; weekdays were merely a tedious interval between Sundays ; there were no reserves in my boyish enthusiasm and idolatry. After a while, by a daring and ingenuity at which I now marvel, I contrived also to attend the Thursday morning service. About this time I began to teach myself Pitman's Phonography, and naturally practised on Dr. Parker. On Sunday evenings the seat I coveted and usually secured was the step beside the then reporter. The white-haired pew steward used to say, "There's room for a little un here," and I gratefully dropped into it. I used to regard the reporter with an awe and reverence less only than that I felt for Dr. Parker, and never in my most ambitious moments did I ever imagine myself occupying his seat. But I often wished I could "do

something" for the preacher I admired so ardently, and felt what a great delight and high honour it would be, say, to be permitted to help with his correspondence.

On Sunday evening 6th February, 1882, before commencing the sermon, Dr. Parker mentioned that he had lost his reporter, who had followed him and taken down his every breathing for years, and invited any young man present who could write shorthand to take down the sermon and send him a leaf from his notebook. I took down as much of the sermon as I could, and sent Dr. Parker a transcript of part of it. On February 11th he wrote that he would be glad to confer with me and asked me to call at the City Temple the following Monday afternoon. I shall never forget that, my first, interview with Dr. Parker. It took place in his private room below the vestry. He received and spoke to me very kindly, but mercilessly contrasted my imperfect report with his late stenographer's faultless transcript. To me it seemed that his eyes literally shot fire. I can see the lurid gleam now as vividly as I did then, and I shrivelled up into nothingness. He, however, consoled me by saying that the report was "wonderful for my age" (I was fifteen and a half); he had no doubt that in two years I should be able to report as well as the late reporter, and asked me to let him hear from me again.

A few months after, at a Thursday service, Dr. Parker sent out to inquire whether I could "take down verbatim." I promptly replied "No." But on 20th September, 1882, he made a speech at the Thirteenth Anniversary of the Thursday

morning service, and thinking he would like to have it reported I left a transcript of speech and sermon at the City Temple on the Saturday. The next day, after the morning sermon, Dr. Parker, with his accustomed promptitude, said from the pulpit that he would be glad to see at the conclusion of the service his young friend who had kindly sent him a report of the last Thursday morning sermon, adding, explanatorily, that he had no other way of communicating with him that day. My white-haired friend, who seemed to be even more excited than I was, proudly marched me into the vestry before the second service. Dr. Parker told me he was very glad to have the speech (it was printed in the *Christian Chronicle* that week), said that my reporting had greatly improved, asked what I was doing, and added that if I had wanted employment, which I did not, he would have taken me to himself altogether. He asked me to take down the evening sermon as a trial, and that proving satisfactory, the next Sunday offered me so much a year to report him regularly. This arrangement continued until the following appeared in the *Christian Chronicle* of 2nd October, 1884, "Under the Sycamore":—

Dr. Parker says: "I want an amanuensis who can write easily to dictation, say not less than sixty words a minute; a very clear longhand writer; his whole time will be required; on no account must he get it into his head that he can *preach*, for when that lunacy gets into a man's head he is (unless a genius) much worse than if he were dead and buried. The salary is one hundred pounds a year."

In less than a month I became, to quote the agreement, Dr. Parker's "Literary Assistant and Private Secretary." That position I held for six years and six months, with the addition, in the latter part of the time, of an appointment from the deacons of the City Temple. During this period *The People's Bible*, which provided the staple of my work, was practically completed, and journalism was absorbing more and more of my time. My first journalistic effort was to interview Dr. Parker, who at once initiated me into the mysteries of the art and simplified the process by dictating the questions as well as the answers. From 1892 to 1898 I reported Dr. Parker only intermittently, but at the end of that year preacher and reporter were again brought into regular relations by Dr. Robertson Nicoll, whom neither great nor small can elude, and verbatim reports of Dr. Parker's sermons now appear regularly in the *City Temple Pulpit*, published monthly by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. The new arrangement commenced on 1st January, 1899, and on the second Sunday morning Dr. Parker's high spirits overflowed into the following :

"I have preached a little longer these two Sunday mornings, because there is an awful man here who will not be satisfied unless I speak a certain number of pages. That man is the reporter, and the only reporter who has ever taken me down to my own satisfaction. The sermons preached on Sunday morning and on Thursday morning will be published according to the announcement. This will be a new bond of union amongst us. The strain is severe upon me, but it has its compensations and its rich joys. In

the evening, when the reporter is not here, we can do very much what we please, and to-night, God willing, we will do it. I have a contrastive sermon, and I am longing to be at it. Let us work while it is called day, God's day."

Practically the whole of the twenty-five volumes of *The People's Bible* were spoken from the pulpit. In 1884 (the year of his first chairmanship of the Congregational Union of England and Wales), Dr. Parker resuming his ministry after the summer holiday, on Sunday, 28th September, discoursed in the morning on his visit to America, and in the evening commenced what he described as the tug-of-war. He said :

"This is a very important occasion to me ; it may be an occasion of some importance to you, and to many others in the providence of God in years to come. I am just about to open the Bible, and to ask you to fix your eyes year by year, God willing, upon the miracle of books. This is the determination to which I have been led, and I trust divinely and humbly,—just to begin at the very beginning of the Book, and, so far as life and energy holds out, to set down in order what thoughts may be given to me about the revelation as a whole. Some parts of the day I shall preach here and there in the Book, but generally I trust one part of the day to keep on the steady line of comment and exposition. It will take years to do this ; the whole speech will occupy some five-and-twenty volumes ; the volumes will be entitled *The People's Bible*. I thought of calling it 'The Preacher's Bible'—there is no preacher's Bible, it is the people's Bible, and the little children shall be made, so far as I am able, to understand some parts of it, and to find it the very

best book that ever was written. And so it is a solemn occasion to me, the beginning and the consummation of my lifework. If I can get this done, just get the five-and-twentieth volume out, I shall feel I have done all I can do, and leave it to speak to any one in after time who may care to listen to its testimony."

Dr. Parker then read the Introduction as it now appears in the first volume of *The People's Bible*, this being one of the very few chapters that he wrote with his own hand. Permitting nothing to turn him aside from his great purpose, he completed the undertaking within seven years. On 27th January, 1885, he delivered to Messrs. Hazell, Watson and Viney the manuscript of the first volume, and handed in the last two volumes on January 31st, 1895. Dr. Parker's material was always ready a long way ahead of publication. No printer or publisher ever had to wait for his "copy." And herein is one of the secrets of his success and mastery of life. He always keeps well in advance of his work, and in all departments preserves a broad margin. He has no arrears ; he starts every day with a clean slate and a clear desk. I have never seen him in a hurry, I have never known him to be late ; he never forgets anything that he desires to remember, small or great. He does not burden his mind with miscellaneous lumber ; he stores away in his capacious brain those things that are likely to be useful, and sooner or later everything is turned to account. From 1884 to 1891 the Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Thursday morning sermons all went to constitute *The People's Bible*. For instance, he preached twenty-nine consecutive sermons on

the Book of Numbers, and thirty-two out of thirty-three sermons were based on the Book of Deuteronomy, and every one of them was listened to by a large congregation. The marvel is that any man should have been able to combine so successfully the functions of Biblical commentator and popular preacher. In addition, during the week, he frequently privately dictated for *The People's Bible* matter equal to from one to three sermons. Add to all this occasional contributions to British and American periodicals, the usual heavy correspondence, pastoral responsibilities, public engagements, and other duties of a man in his position, and we have a really wonderful tale of work.

The circumstances under which some of *The People's Bible* was put into words are worth noting. Parts of it, including, "Handfuls of Purpose," (suggestive outlines and seed-thoughts intended for expansion by preachers into sermons, in which, many consider, the author reaches his highest intellectual and spiritual level) Dr. Parker, fresh from his bath, and enveloped in a huge Turkish towel, dictated immediately before the Thursday morning service, in his private room at the City Temple, amid the loud and persistent clanging of an iron foundry immediately opposite, the agitation of a piano-organ beneath the window, the rattle of carts past the corner of Plumtree-court, and the cries of the vendors of early editions of the evening papers. Distractions that to most people are absolutely fatal to all mental productiveness have absolutely no effect upon Dr. Parker. I do not think I can better describe his style of dictation

than by the word oracular. Usually he has no notes, always he speaks without apparent effort, he never hesitates, never retracts a word, seems to finish automatically, and never alters a syllable or adds a line. It is the same with the sermons delivered in public. Sometimes Dr. Parker preaches without the aid of a scrap of paper, but usually he takes with him into the pulpit the barest skeleton notes, frequently written in pencil on half a sheet of note-paper.

During the preparation of *The People's Bible* I took down every syllable of every prayer and every sermon, and sent direct to the printers my verbatim transcript of those required for periodical publication. I have never yet succeeded in getting Dr. Parker really to read the proof of any one of his sermons. If I call his attention to a doubtful point, he will attend to it, and I feel like one receiving a favour. For himself he never thinks of changing a syllable; if reporter and printer have done their work properly he is content to leave the rest. Unlike most authors, he seems to have a strong aversion to perusing his own productions; I have never known him to read through from beginning to end any of his own sermons, whether in script, typewriting, or print. This is all the more remarkable because Dr. Parker's utterances are so perfect in literary finish that many people imagine he first composes his sermons and then recites them from memory. One finds it hard to believe that all of his wonderful epigrams are wholly impromptu, yet it is the literal truth that the language of the sermon as a whole is forged in the pulpit as required. It is interesting to contrast Dr.

Parker's method with that of C. H. Spurgeon, who went through most elaborate processes of preparation, and spent the most of Monday in severely revising and here and there rewriting the stenographer's report of his Sunday morning sermon.

The further Dr. Parker gets away from manuscript, the better he preaches. Usually he covers the ground outlined in his notes, but I have known him to devote practically the whole sermon to the first head. Sometimes he seems to be literally "possessed"; his voice takes on a peculiar swing, there is a steady, even flow of words, the pauses are few, and he seems to be merely the medium through which a message is being delivered. On special occasions, Dr. Parker is never at his best, and sometimes at his very worst. Several times within my recollection he has written out an important deliverance in full, and during the unnatural process I have felt sorely tempted to arrange that the manuscript should be lost, and might have yielded but that anybody in Dr. Parker's circle who loses or forgets anything instantly goes away into outer darkness. The difference between Dr. Parker speaking extemporaneously, and reading his own composition, is precisely the difference between life and death. I do not know that he has an equal as a reader of the Scriptures, but to hear him repeat a sermon or speech that he has first written is to me like witnessing a procession of corpses. The anatomy is perfect, but the warm blood and vital spark are lacking. At one time or another I have "taken down" all the leading British and not a few American preachers, and several of our greatest

public speakers, including W. E. Gladstone ; but I have yet to hear the orator who in extemporaneous utterance equals Dr. Parker in richness of vocabulary, aptness of phrase, rhythm of sentence, perfect finish of style, faultlessness of elocution, and I may add spontaneity of wit. With a scientific system of stenography like Pitman's, a fountain pen, and a speaker like Dr. Parker, notetaking is a positive luxury ; to which is added the enjoyment of the varied manifestations of his dramatic genius, the play of his humour, the daring flights of his imagination, and the wide reach of his philosophy.

Dr. Parker very rarely quotes. I doubt whether there are more than a dozen literal quotations other than Biblical in all the sermons in the twenty-five volumes of *The People's Bible*. Verbal repetition is to him difficult and almost impossible. Sometimes he quotes the Bible literally, but more often he paraphrases, extends, amplifies, and thus illuminates a passage. In matters of punctuation, spelling, the use of words, as, indeed, in all else, Dr. Parker is a precisian. In something he once gave me to copy I detected a deviation from the accepted orthography, doubtless due to a slip of the pen. I ventured to tell him that he had not spelt the word as it appears in the dictionary. "Never mind the dictionary !" was the instant instruction.

It is impossible for Dr. Parker literally to repeat himself. Necessarily he reiterates in various forms certain great truths and facts, and he has used an illustration more than once, but in all my experience of his preaching I have never known a case of verbal repetition. There are a dozen texts on which he

has preached a dozen times, but the language of all the sermons varies, and each contains thoughts not found in the others. When preaching away from the City Temple Dr. Parker usually chooses a text upon which he has discoursed before. The sermons he delivered during his memorable Rural Mission in Scotland, in August, 1888, were mostly what the indiscriminating would call "travellers." That Mission, by the way, was one of the most successful of Dr. Parker's undertakings. In eighteen days he visited Dunbar, Hawick, Galashiels, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Tillicoultry, Stirling, Callander, Dunoon, Rothesay, Oban, and Crieff, and preached twenty-two sermons, each in a different building.

At the close of the Rural Mission, Dr. Parker was entertained at a breakfast and presented with an album containing the following address, signed by ministers of Scottish churches of all denominations :—

"Crieff, August 16th, 1888.

"Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

"Rev. and Honoured Sir,—We, the following ministers of Christian Churches, desire to express to you our gratitude for the generous and valuable services in the cause of our common Lord and Master which you have rendered in your present 'Rural Mission' in Scotland. Your presence and earnest Christian words have quickened our spirits and refreshed those of the thousands who have waited on God under your ministry. The seed sown will, we believe, with the Divine blessing, bring forth fruit unto eternal life. We commend you and your work to the God of all grace, and pray that you may be long spared to be an able and eloquent expounder of the

oracles of God, and to preach with increasing zeal the Gospel of His beloved Son."

Regular worshippers at the City Temple frequently remark how much better Dr. Parker preaches when his sermon is being taken down than when it is not. Doubtless the preacher is inspired by the thought of the far vaster congregation than the City Temple could hold that he is addressing. He has more or less seriously professed complete indifference to the size and constituents of his congregation so long as the reporter is present, averring that it is to him that he preaches.

The electrophone has recently been fitted to the City Temple, and one Sunday evening I went to the Company's Exchange in Gerrard-street, Soho, to test it. Greatly to my surprise I was able to record in my note-book every syllable of the prayer and announcements and all but a few sentences of the sermon, and a full report was published in a weekly paper. At times Dr. Parker's magnificent voice sounded as if he were speaking in the next room, instead of being one or two miles away.

As a preacher Dr. Parker in his seventy-first year is undoubtedly at his best. All his faculties are at their ripest; the signs are not of decay, but of constantly renewed strength. His matchless voice, though he does not relax the severity of his demands upon it, rings out as resonantly as at any time these twenty years. If any hearer fails to catch a word, or misses a point, it is not the preacher's fault. The ever-increasing congregations, larger now than at any previous period, witness the growing public appreciation of the minister of the City Temple.

One of the principal men in connection with the Grand Pacific Railway attended service in the City Temple one Sunday, and mentioned that that was his first Sunday in London. Whilst the railway was being constructed he lodged for six months in a very small public-house; there he found only one book—that book was *Ecce Deus*. He read it again and again, and resolved that he would hear the author the first time he was in London.

In December, 1896, Dr. Parker received a remarkable memorial urging him to visit Belfast. The document was signed by the Lord Mayor and the ex-Lord Mayor, by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, by the President of Assembly College and by the President of Queen's College. It said: "A visit from one whose services in the City Temple for many years have been so remarkable a feature of the religious life of London, and whose eminence as a preacher and writer has made his name familiar in this community, would be much appreciated."

BOOKS BY DR. PARKER.

- 1854—"Six Chapters on Secularism."
1857—"Helps to Truth-Seekers."
1858—"Congregational Economist."
1862—"Church Questions."
1864—"Hidden Springs."
1865—"Wednesday Evenings in Cavendish Chapel."
1866-70—"Pulpit Analyst."
1867—"Ecce Deus."
1868—"Springdale Abbey."
1869—"Ad Clerum."
1874—"Job's Comforters." "The Paraclete."
1876—"The Priesthood of Christ."
1880—"Tyne Chylde."
1881-2—"The Inner Life of Christ" (3 vols.)
1883—"Apostolic Life" (3 vols.)
1885-92—"The People's Bible" (25 vols.)
1889—"The People's Family Prayer Book."
1890—"Someone."
1893—"Well Begun."
1894—"None Like It."
1894—"To-Day's Bible."
1895—"To-Day's Christ."
1895—"Walden Stanyer."
1896—"Christian Profiles."
1896—"Might Have Been: Some Life Notes."
1898—"Studies in Texts" (6 vols.)
1898—"Paterson's Parish: A Lifetime amongst the Dissenters."
1899—"Preacher's Life: an Autobiography and an Album."

XIII.

AMERICA.

MENTION has already been made of Dr. Parker's first visit to America. It was repeated at intervals four times. The free and eager life of the people, the absence of a State Church, and the large scale on which things move in the United States have always excited his admiration. Of the people of America no one attracted him so much as the late Henry Ward Beecher. The two preachers were in many respects kindred souls ; each admired the other's genius, and had many things in common ; they, with their wives, exchanged visits and corresponded in terms of the most intimate friendship.

In 1886 Mr. and Mrs. Beecher visited Britain, being for six weeks the guests of Dr. and Mrs. Parker. The American preacher conducted several memorable services in the City Temple, and also preached and lectured in different parts of the country. In October Mr. and Mrs. Beecher returned to America. Within six months he had a stroke of apoplexy, which ended fatally on 8th March, 1887. Shortly afterwards Dr. Parker received and accepted an invitation to deliver in New York a Eulogy upon his departed friend, the date finally fixed being 4th October. Mr. Beecher and Major Pond, the lecture agent, had long urged Dr. Parker to undertake a

lecture tour in the United States, and on August 20th, accompanied by Mrs. Parker, he sailed for America for the double purpose.

On Sunday, 2nd October, Dr. Parker preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. The *New York World* the next day said: "The Beecher of England, as Joseph Parker is sometimes called, preached yesterday from the platform in Brooklyn from which the Beecher of America had preached for forty years. The Plymouth pastor never had a larger congregation in his church, for the reason that not another person could have squeezed into the building. Mrs. Beecher sat in her accustomed seat in the pastor's pew, and Dr. Parker's wife sat beside her." During the service a cablegram arrived—"We wish you great success and God's blessing. From the City Temple." After giving a lengthy abstract of the sermon, the text of which was, "He is not here, but is risen," the *World* continues: "Dr. Parker spoke for just an hour. At the conclusion of the services he continued for some time to sit upon the platform, and hundreds of the congregation lingered with the idea of shaking his hand." In the evening (we quote from the *New York Herald*), the congregation again crowded the doors, and many were unable to obtain even standing room. The text of the sermon was one from which Dr. Parker has preached many times, always with great effect—"He lodged with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side" (Acts x. 6). "Crowded and pent up as the immense audience was, he held it in rapt attention to the close."

The Eulogy was delivered on the following

Tuesday. Says the *New York Herald*: "It was a great night for Brooklyn. The Academy of Music was crowded with men of learning and distinction. Row after row of snowy heads and scholarly countenances stretched across the wide auditorium. The balconies were bright with ladies. On the big stage, where clustering lights whitened the atmosphere, were assembled groups of scholars and orators and soldiers. Here the glitter of scabbards and the gleam of epaulets, and there the black raiment and wintry locks of venerable wisdom. On one hand the gentle face and folded hands of Mr. Beecher's brother Edward, and on the other the well-remembered face of his aged wife. When the Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker was led to the front of the platform a wild storm of applause swept over the great audience. He was introduced by the Rev. Charles H. Hall, who said that Brooklyn had gathered to hear an Englishman's estimate of her great man." The *Brooklyn Eagle* said: "The attendance was extraordinary for numbers and character. The oration was remarkable in matter of statement and in manner of delivery. Its reception by the audience was such as expressed a high intellectual appreciation and a warm approbation of the heart. The *Eagle* regards the oration as one on which encomium is unnecessary and criticism almost impossible. It is a great treatment of a great man by a great man." The Eulogy is printed in Dr. Parker's miscellanea, *Might Have Been*.

The possibility of Dr. Parker settling in America had all along much exercised the minds of his friends in London and was actively discussed in

America. After his Sunday morning sermon in Brooklyn, Deacon John T. Howard, who was associated with the Plymouth Church when Mr. Beecher commenced his ministry there, being asked whether the church was likely to invite Dr. Parker to the pastorate, replied: "I have the greatest admiration for Dr. Parker, and always have had since I first heard him in the City Temple. Personally, I should be very glad if he could be persuaded to remain with us, but I do not think it likely we can prevail upon him to leave London." Certainly he did not hold out any encouragement. Interviewed at Toronto, Dr. Parker was asked whether there was any truth in the statement that there was a strong probability of his being appointed Beecher's successor; he "replied emphatically: 'No such question has ever been brought up. First and last it has been nothing more than newspaper gossip, pure and simple, without even a shadow of fact for a foundation. There is absolutely nothing in it.'" Dr. Parker told the present writer that practically the only inducement the Brooklyn Church could hold out was money, and as soon as he arrived in America he gave them to understand that that would not move him.

After a crowded and extended lecturing tour through the States and Canada Dr. Parker returned to England in December. On arriving home he found awaiting him a handsome Wootton desk, presented to him by his deacons, "as an expression of their high appreciation of his faithful ministry and literary labours, and of their unfeigned joy and thankfulness that he has safely returned from America to resume

his work in their midst." A great meeting of the church and congregation assembled in the City Temple on 13th February and gave the pastor and his wife an enthusiastic welcome home. The Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes hung together in front of the pulpit, and the inscription, "A Loving Welcome from Loyal Hearts" faced Dr. Parker when he stood up to address his devoted people. He expressed his joy at being home again, and his gratitude to the friends who had carried on the work of the City Temple during his absence. He spoke in terms of the warmest appreciation of the abounding kindness he had received across the Atlantic, and paid tribute to the high quality of the ministers whom he met. Speaking of his lecture tour he said he went out to deliver twenty-five lectures; he actually delivered thirty-seven, and was invited to deliver thirty-seven more. But, having more than fulfilled his original intention, finding that America is not one of those measurable little islands that a man can run up and down in, that the night in America is as the day, that delivering a lecture which excited him, rushing into a train which shook him, remaining in the heated cars all night, and rising in the morning more like a ruffian and a highwayman than a Christian, required a more Herculean frame than his to get through it all with safety, not to say comfort, he thought it time to come home again, and did so with the least possible delay.

On the financial side of his lecturing tour Dr. Parker of course said nothing to his congregation, that being a purely business matter between himself and his agent. But Major Pond has made public a

characteristic incident which may here be quoted. The Major says that Dr. Parker had been lecturing to crowded houses and further lectures were arranged for, but, being too ill to go on, he returned to New York and booked his passage home.

"There was," says Major Pond, "due to Dr. Parker £220 for lectures that he had delivered. Of course I had been making money on his lectures, and to stop and cancel was a financial loss to me, but as in all contracts, illness or unavoidable circumstances render this agreement null and void, I could only settle with Dr. Parker by paying what was due him. I made out the statement and accompanying cheque for £220. He sent for me the day before he sailed. As I came into his dignified and sombre presence the Doctor said: 'Major Pond, I sail for my home to-morrow. My health is such that I cannot go on. The long voyages frighten me, and I am so completely collapsed when I arrive at the end of a day's journey that I cannot address my audiences. Under these conditions, and with this certificate of one of your most eminent physicians, I am legally released from any obligation to you. You owe me £220 according to this statement. I propose to go away from America owing no one and having no one owe me, and you wish to pay me? You give me this cheque, which I suppose is good.' Holding the cheque in his hand, he proceeded to tear it up. 'You are an honourable man. I want you to feel welcome at all times in my house in London. As to what you owe me, I propose to give you five hundred years to pay me, and if when due you cannot meet it I will renew it five hundred years more.'

"That," adds Major Pond, "was Dr. Parker's eccentric business way."

XIV.

TWO SILVER WEDDINGS.

ON December 22nd, 1889, Dr. and Mrs. Parker completed twenty-five years of married life, and the next day the silver wedding was celebrated in the heartiest manner by the church and congregation. The large hall of the City Temple, gaily decorated for the occasion, was thronged with a jubilant assembly. In describing the proceedings at the time the present writer said : " Mrs. Parker was just radiant, and might have excited doubts (but for Mr. Jones's irrefutable testimony) whether she could possibly have been married twenty-five years." To the musical programme she contributed a song, " Twenty-One," and throughout the evening exhibited all the brightness and vivacity associated with that age. The gathering was intended to be a purely family one ; consequently, with one or two exceptions, only church members and seat-holders were present. Some friends from Cavendish-street Chapel, Manchester, came up to London on purpose to join in the celebration, and the pastor and congregation of that church telegraphed congratulations. Mr. John C. Jones wrote from Cheadle Hulme a most genial letter, the substance of which has been quoted in Chapter VI. ; old Banbury friends sent greetings, presents came from Hexham,

and messages poured in from many other parts of the country.

Mr. John G. Murdoch (head of the firm of J. G. Murdoch & Sons, Ltd.), in the course of a most affectionate and loyal speech, mentioned that not one of the more than three hundred letters and messages bearing upon the silver wedding he had received from members of the congregation contained a single unsympathetic expression or word of disapproval of the action of the deacons in arranging the celebration. Some people had suggested that the door should have been open to a much larger number of friends, but, Mr. Murdoch explained, "we wanted the celebration to be our own, we wanted to show to our honoured and esteemed pastor and his wife how much we personally love them, and I am pleased to say that the whole matter has gone as sweetly as the sweetest marriage bells." Mr. Murdoch then presented a beautiful illuminated address and a silver salver, kettle, flowerbowl, and a set of silver candlesticks. The salver is engraved: "Presented to the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., and Mrs. Parker on the occasion of the celebration of their silver wedding, 22nd December, 1889, by the members of the church and congregation at the City Temple, in grateful recognition of their faithful ministry and service."

Dr. Parker's speech in response was very brilliant and witty. In describing the occasion as a silver wedding his friends were chronologically exact, but sentimentally and sympathetically he differed from them. "By one touch of the magical wand of your kindness, that which was silver has become

gold ; we have already realised what it must be to receive tributes and expressions of affection even on the anniversary which is called the golden wedding." The deacons were correct in their estimate of what was due to the "co-pastor" of the City Temple (Mrs. Parker). "Whatever I be, I would not have been half the man I am but for such co-operation and sympathy and exquisite criticism." Mr. Murdoch had urged the pastor to take more rest, and Dr. Parker intimated his intention to act upon the advice. "The time has now come when I really must calculate what I can do—a process I never went through in the earlier years of my ministry. I never knew I had a throat, I never knew what it was to be called 'Mondayish.' I preached on Sunday morning in the church, on Sunday afternoon in the cricket field, on Sunday evening in the church again, and during the evenings of the week I frequently preached in the open air in the poorer districts of the town. I then knew nothing about being tired. But somehow, account for it as you may, I now know that I am working, and when a man feels that he is working he ought to take care." After a few more words of thanks and appreciation from Dr. Parker the rejoicings ended to the strains of the Wedding March, played by the City Temple Orchestral band.

It seems strange to find Dr. Parker before he was sixty years of age talking as though he were conscious of getting old. For a time he did show some signs of weariness ; no doubt the tremendous incessant strain of preparing *The People's Bible* told upon even his iron constitution, but the physical

depression and lassitude passed away, and he was soon his buoyant, vigorous self again.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the commencement of Dr. Parker's ministry in the City of London was celebrated on May 10th, 1894, by a great meeting in the City Temple, when a series of presentations was made to the pastor and his wife. Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., presided, and the proceedings opened with the hymn, "Come let us join our cheerful songs." Prayer having been offered by Mr. E. Harrison, senior deacon, the Rev. John Matthews read letters from friends unable to be present. Dr. Guinness Rogers wrote of Dr. Parker: "The City Temple is the memorial of his brilliant service." Dr. W. M. Sinclair, Archdeacon of London, paid tribute to the "vast and permanent influence for good in the City and in London" of his "excellent friend and neighbour, Dr. Parker." Dr. Talmage, who sent ten dollars to be turned into flowers, said, "All Christendom joins in congratulation to Dr. Parker," who had "put all Christian nations under obligation." The Chairman said the world's final judgment on Dr. Parker would be, "He was a man," and the church would add, "of God." Dr. Samuel Newth presented a portrait in oils and an album containing a congratulatory address subscribed by seven hundred ministers of the Free and Established Churches. The portrait is life-size, representing Dr. Parker in ordinary attire in a sitting posture; the artist is Mr. Robert Gibb, of the Royal Scottish Academy.

Mr. Walter Bull, deacon, was to have presented a cheque for £1,000 from the church and congregation, but, in his absence, through nervous prostration, Mr. H. W. Chapman, deacon, who was a member of the church when it met in the Poultry Chapel, read his colleague's speech, which bore emphatic testimony to Dr. Parker's worth in both private and public relations. Mr. Chapman next presented a mural tablet, the cost of which—£80—was defrayed by Mr. Bull. Mr. Chapman added his testimony to the great benefits received from Dr. Parker's teaching, and his personal kindness. The tablet, now fixed in the vestibule of the City Temple, is thus inscribed: "Presented in token of high appreciation by Walter Bull, one of the deacons of the City Temple."

Dr. Parker's first text as Pastor of the Church, 19th Sept., 1869. "I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight" 1869.	Dr. Parker's Text, 24th June, 1894. "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise." 1894.
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"This Tablet is erected to commemorate the faithful service in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ during a period of twenty-five years in the City of London rendered by the REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D."

The Rev. Principal Vaughan Pryce, on behalf of the ladies of the congregation, presented Dr. Parker

with pulpit robes as an evidence of their high admiration of his lofty genius and their deep love and attachment to the man as well as to his ministry.

Mr. John Morgan Richards, treasurer of the City Temple, who, for many years, has been one of Dr. Parker's most loyal supporters and intimate friends, presented Mrs. Parker with a diamond pendant, asking, how could they recognise the debt the church owed to Mrs. Parker—her high purpose, powerful mind, hopeful, cheerful, happy, willing solicitude and devoted sympathy? The jewel was a token of their gratitude and loving loyalty.

Dr. Parker, on rising to acknowledge the various gifts, met with an ovation, the assembly rising and cheering. Beginning, "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, fathers and brethren in the ministry, friends and visitors from all quarters, I deeply and lovingly thank you for all that has been said and done," he mentioned specifically and emphatically those who had contributed out of very limited means and almost out of their poverty. He acknowledged the deep indebtedness of his wife and himself to Mr. Compton Rickett, whose attention to every line and detail of the whole demonstration they could never forget. After complimenting Mr. Gibbs upon the portrait, "done by a master in his art," Dr. Parker said he was made young again by the testimony of his deacons. Unless he deceived himself, he never felt more vigorous than at that moment. Acknowledging the presentation to Mrs. Parker, he said, "Mr. Chairman, the diamonds are of great value, their radiance is indisputable; but I am here after thirty years' experience and observa-

tion to say that the radiance of the diamonds is eclipsed and quenched by the glory of the life they are intended to adorn." He admired the Christian cunning of the ladies in seeking to detain him by the gift of pulpit robes ; for if after receiving such a token he sought a sphere of service elsewhere he would be the basest of ingrates. Dr. Parker's closing words were : " If I have wronged any man, I humble myself before him. If I have done any man any injustice, I can say before high heaven I have done it unconsciously and unintentionally. But if I have wounded any man, grieved any man, hurt any man, I am prepared to say to that man, Forgive me, and in the act of forgiveness prove the genuineness of your own Christianity."

After the congregation had sung the hymn beginning " All hail the power of Jesu's name ! " eloquent tributes to Dr. Parker were paid by the Rev. H. Price Hughes, who said that his (Welsh) race loved Dr. Parker, and that he was eminently *pastor pastorum* ; the Rev. J. P. Gledstone, who testified that at the meetings of the London Board of Congregational ministers no man gave his friends a kinder grip of the hand and a warmer Godspeed in their work than Dr. Parker ; and Dr. C. A. Berry, who referred to " the opulence of his mental gifts, the breadth of his vision, the manliness of the man as a preacher, the fecundity of ideas that is our despair and yet our gladness ; above all, the heart that is in the man," and, shaking hands with Dr. Parker in sight of the audience, thus concluded : " May you and yours through the years to come know increasingly that we love you, trust you,

learn from you, and that in the capacity of preacher-prophet (in its true etymological sense), we regard you on the topmost pinnacle, even if we differ in other relations, and this day here we recognise you as a prince and king among men." Dr. Clifford, as representing the Baptist denomination, spoke in the same high vein, saying, "We love him, we read his books, and buy them; we read his sermons, and if we cannot repeat them we find the impact upon us the next Sunday, and our congregations are largely benefited thereby. We discuss him, we debate him; we know his faults as well as we know our own, probably a little better." Dr. Clifford's closing sentence was enthusiastically endorsed by all present, and has many a time echoed all over the globe: "May God in His goodness long preserve to this city and the world our friend Dr. Joseph Parker!" Speeches were also delivered by the Rev. Ebenezer Jenkins, L.L.D., the Rev. Alexander Jeffrey, the Rev. Dr. Adamson, the proceedings concluding with the Doxology and the benediction.

The Address above referred to reads as follows:—

"We, the undersigned, Ministers of the Word and your fellow-servants in the Lord, desire to offer you our hearty congratulations on the completion of the twenty-fifth year of your Thursday Noonday Service in the City of London. We bless the Giver of all good that He has preserved your life and health during these successive years, and enabled you through this weekly Service to be the channel of His Grace to all sorts and conditions of men. We gratefully acknowledge the benefits which have been derived from your teaching, the guidance and stimulus it has given to Christian work by the fresh and vivid aspects under which the Truth has been presented, and especially by your pointed and sympathetic application of the Gospel message to the circumstances of the men and women of the present day. We are also thankful for the influence this Service has exerted in promoting amongst Christians the feeling of brotherhood and unity, and we pray that you may long be spared in vigour to discharge the duties of your sacred office. We beg your acceptance of the accompanying portrait as a permanent memorial of our gratitude, affection, and esteem."

XV.

ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS.

WHAT Dr. Parker regards as, in its own peculiar way, the best compliment he ever received came from an omnibus conductor. The vehicle was crossing Holborn Viaduct, and when it came to the City Temple a passenger alighted. "That's the man and that's the place," said the conductor, indicating Dr. Parker's church. "I went there once, and I enjoyed myself so much that I'm going again the first night off I have. We laughed and we cried and we had a rare time. You see," the conductor continued, "he doesn't make religion so ——— serious."

An Evangelist who laboured at E——great Heath, Cambs., among brick-makers, navvies, farm-labourers, coprolite-diggers, and men of that class, brought one of them, a brick-maker, to London for a holiday and took him to the City Temple. When the service was over the Evangelist said, "Well, Sam, what do you think of Dr. Parker?" "I tell 'ee what it is, sir," was the reply; "that's just the sort of preaching as we wants up at the Heath." "Is it, Sam?" said his friend, somewhat astonished. "Yes, sir," was the answer, "what we wants there is a man as has got summat to say, and as knows how to say it."

A correspondent of *M.A.P.* (May, 1900) tells "on excellent authority" the following story as showing Dr. Parker's generous thoughtfulness: "A fellow-minister had worn himself out, and, at the age of fifty-five, suffered from the effects of bad health and impoverished resources. Dr. Parker's gift to his old friend on his birthday morning came in the shape of a lovely bunch of roses—fifty-five in number—and in the heart of each rose Dr. Parker had unobtrusively placed a sovereign."

One day Dr. Parker received a very remarkable letter from a total stranger, a member of the Church of England. He said that having read a scurrilous article about him, he was curious to hear the preacher who had been so bitterly attacked. He attended a service at the City Temple, and the next day wrote to Dr. Parker saying he had been greatly blessed by prayer and sermon, and begging him to accept the enclosure as an expression of his personal gratitude. The enclosure was a Bank of England note for £100.

In Dr. Parker's Banbury days he ordered of his tailor a coat, stipulating that it must be "black, glossy, and cheap—but the greatest of these is cheap."

"I wear a gown in the pulpit," Dr. Parker once explained, "because I have the worst coat in the denomination. The gown saves a tailor's bill. I never could learn to dress myself."

The mover of a vote of thanks to Dr. Parker made a short and graceful speech. The seconder was less happy, and ventured to criticise the orator. This

touched him ; replying, he said, with a significant movement of the hand, "I am debtor both to the Greek and to the Barbarian." Addressing the Wesleyan Conference in 1899, Dr. Parker said that when the previous speaker, Dr. McEwan, called himself "a humble Presbyterian," he (Dr. Parker) said to himself, "I will turn aside and see this great sight." "At this" (says the *Methodist Recorder*) "the Conference was simply convulsed."

A minister who could not get a church implored Dr. Parker to explain the reason of his difficulty. He was scholarly, studious, well-informed, willing to work, but no church would invite him. Dr. Parker told him to stand up in the corner of his study and preach his best sermon, promising at the end to give him as fair a verdict as he could upon the position. The unfortunate man obeyed, and preached his best sermon. At the end of the performance Dr. Parker delivered his judgment—brief, incisive, summary. "Now I can tell you why you cannot get a church. For the last half-hour you have not been trying to get something into my mind, but something off yours. You are like a man anxious to get rid of a sack of coals. That is the explanation of your failure."

Some years ago alarmist rumours as to the state of Dr. Parker's health were in circulation. It was said that he was suffering from an internal trouble which would necessitate his early retirement from the City Temple. By way of relieving the anxiety of his friends, Dr. Parker assured the City Temple congregation one Sunday night that he had a splendid

constitution, a tremendous constitution, and that the only internal trouble he ever suffered from came on about four times a day !

Someone connected with a new London suburban chapel which Dr. Parker had opened was telling a friend of the event. "Oh !" said the friend, "you had to pay a pretty sum for Dr. Parker's sermon, I expect : did you not ? I dare say it cost you £25 at the very least." "That was the exact sum that passed between us," was the reply. "And that is what you call giving the Gospel of Christ free to every one that asketh for it ?" "Precisely," said the man who knew the facts ; "that is just what Parker did. He gave us the sermon, and he gave us the £25 too."

In one of Dr. Parker's public prayers occurred the sentence, "Disgrace not the throne of Thy glory." At this one hearer was scandalised, and charged Dr. Parker with irreverence and profanity. "Shall a man be permitted," he asked, "to stand up in a Christian pulpit and, addressing the Almighty, say, 'Disgrace not the throne of Thy glory' ?" A Presbyterian minister who was appealed to said that the speaker of such words had been guilty of rank blasphemy. Dr. Parker was merely quoting the Bible (Jer. xiv. 21).

Before Dr. Parker came to London a Midland publisher approached him with a view to the regular issue of his sermons. The matter was discussed and finally the question of terms came up. "Well," replied the publisher when Dr. Parker inquired what were his proposals on this head, "it's all for

the glory of God." "Not so fast," returned the young minister. "You mean to sell the sermons, do you not?" "Yes." "In that case I must share. Selling at a penny means a possible profit. Why not divide both the profits and the glory?"

Asked by a magazine editor how he passed his time when travelling by train, Dr. Parker replied: "By making incessant but unsuccessful efforts to fall asleep."

For a time Dr. Parker gave what he called one-minute sermons, in which, after the regular discourse, he commented on some matter of public interest. A minister's son, when told to get ready for church, said, "Is there not a gentleman who preaches for one minute? Let us go and hear him."

The minister of the City Temple, preaching in the north of England, had said something so exceedingly "Parker-esque" that at the railway station after the sermon someone connected with the church ventured on a gentle word of remonstrance. Acting on the principle of military tactics that attack is often the best method of defence, Dr. Parker's only response was, "And what else of the sermon can you remember?" The objector was nonplussed.

To the question, "At what historic event would you most like to have been present?" Dr. Parker is reported to have replied, "At the creation."

When Dr. Parker was proceeding from the vestry to the platform of the City Temple, during an assembly of the Congregational Union, a gentleman asked if he might have "one word" with him. "Two, if

you are quick," was the answer. "Do you know Mrs. So-and-So, Doctor?" "I do." "Is she well?" "Quite well." "Is she in better circumstances than she was?" "She is quite rich." This information excited surprise, which at once changed to chagrin when Dr. Parker added, "She is in heaven." "The man ought to have helped her while she was on earth—he could" was Dr. Parker's comment as he ascended the platform.

When Dr. Parker is sitting in his vestry his foot rests on the knob of a bell, which he rings unobserved. On one occasion a very pale-faced young man went into the vestry, and, after a moment's hesitation said, "I am studying to be a poet." "No sooner did I hear these ominous words," says Dr. Parker, "than I touched my electric bell with my left foot, in response to which an assistant appeared, and we gracefully got the young budding poet out into the open air with the least possible delay."

Dr. Parker relates a curious incident in his own experience. He was in the company of some friends who were amusing themselves with planchette, and promised that if it would answer a silent question of his he would believe in it. The instrument spelt out a certain name, upon which Dr. Parker said: "That is the most mysterious thing I have ever known. The question I mentally asked was, 'Who is to be the architect of the City Temple?'" The toy had actually written the name of a man who had that very day submitted plans.

In the course of a Thursday morning sermon Dr. Parker, ridiculing certain forms of "spiritualism,"

drew a living picture of "people who go about tapping." Striking an attitude, making an ear-trumpet of his right hand, and inclining his head as though speaking through a telephone, Dr. Parker, personating the "medium," chanted in staccato tones, "Are you there?" "Yes," came the sepulchral answer. "What do you want?" "Nothing!" The congregation was overcome with merriment.

Preaching in Leicester, Dr. Parker found the atmosphere of the chapel insufferably oppressive. He prefaced his sermon with the remark that it would have been a good thing if somebody had gone round that morning and broken all the windows. The hint not being taken, Dr. Parker said plainly that he was accustomed to preach in pure air; and at length several windows were opened.

Babies in church, however restive they may be, never disturb Dr. Parker. An infant having made itself heard one Easter Sunday morning the Doctor paused in his sermon, and, smiling, said, "I love to hear that little voice." A similar incident occurring at a Good Friday service, he said, "I never turn a baby out of church. I don't know what the child was saying, but I know it was all true." At a Sunday evening service he said he was distressed that a child had been taken out the previous Sunday evening. "This church was desecrated by that act. I think that child is here to-night, and I wish it to make any noise which is satisfactory to itself." On another occasion he said: "It is a poor congregation and it is a poor preacher that can't have a little child going

on just as it pleases for the time being. 'He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them.'

At the recognition meeting of the Rev. G. A. Suttle, as pastor of Whitefield's Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, two babies present had been somewhat noisy. Dr. Parker, who presided, said he would not for the world have the children taken out, and told a story under cover of which he took early leave of the meeting. A Scotch preacher announced that "if that child interrupted so, he could not expound the Covenants." As the baby was being taken out of the church it shook its little fist towards the Scotch divine, and shouted "Ta-ta!" "Now," concluded Dr. Parker, "come upon me, O little child, and help me in thine own sweet phrase to say to this large audience, 'Ta-ta!'" So, waving his hand to the assembly, he took his departure.

When Dr. Parker was in his sixty-eighth year he received a letter asking him to attend some demonstration, and by way of strengthening the appeal the correspondent added, with conspicuous want of tact, "Christian England will not have the opportunity of listening to your voice much longer." The service was not rendered.

Sir Edward Russell tells the following story, without vouching for its accuracy: "Reading from one of the Epistles in his pulpit, Dr. Parker came upon a place in which St. Paul speaks of one person as dear and another as most dear, or makes some such distinction. Dr. Parker looked up from his Bible, paused, and then in his most sententious manner said, 'There would be an unpleasantness in

that church.' Another pause, and long solemn nodding of the head: 'There would be a huff.' Another pause and more sage noddings: 'Shall I show you what a huff is?' Then the Doctor turned right round, showing his back to the congregation. And in every fold of his gown, every line of his head, every *finesse* of his attitude, this consummate actor conveyed the idea of huff to his startled audience."

Once when Dr. Parker was preaching in a provincial town, he was much annoyed by a young dandy sitting near him, who, proud of a new gold watch, was continually pulling it out to see what time it was. At length the preacher could stand it no longer. In the very climax of his sermon he suddenly stopped, looking full at the offender, and quietly said: "Put up your watch, young man; we are speaking of eternity, not of time."

In 1889 Dr. Parker invited working men to a series of dinner-hour talks. The announcement ran:—"Come in your working dresses. If you like to bring your dinners with you, bring them. If during the address you would like to smoke your pipes, smoke them. If at the end of the address you want to ask any questions bearing on it, ask them." Mr. John Burns, M.P., was present on one of the days. In one of the talks Dr. Parker excited much enthusiasm by the declaration "Not one single sixpence in the world do I possess but what this head or this hand has earned by honest toil." There were some stormy scenes at the meetings, and when preaching upon the series Dr. Parker chose for his text "The assembly was confused."

XVI.

PULPIT JUBILEE.

IN Chapter I. we described how at the age of eighteen Joseph Parker preached his first sermon ; we now have to chronicle the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of that event. The contrast between the circumstances of the delivery of the first sermon and those of the Jubilee celebration is indicative of how far Dr. Parker has travelled, how high he has risen, and of how much he has accomplished. In 1848 we have a sawpit for a pulpit, and a few villagers for audience ; in 1898 we have the majestic City Temple, with its three hundred guinea pulpit, and a world-wide constituency of which the congregation gathered within the four walls of the church, large as it is, is but a representative fragment. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." It is not easy for the mind to grasp all that is implied when it is said that a man has been preaching for fifty years, and it is utterly impossible to estimate the far-reaching influence of the words spoken during that period.

The jubilee was celebrated at the City Temple on Sunday, June 19th, and on the Thursday following, Dr. Parker preaching both days as usual to crowded congregations, hundreds being unable to gain admission. Doubtless as he stood in the pulpit many

tried to conjure up the figure of the preacher at eighteen and to compare it with his appearance at sixty-eight. Outwardly, of course, there is a great change—the thin lithe figure has filled out, the hair is not so plentiful or so dark as it was, in the stress of life the face has become furrowed. But the changes are all of a superficial and external kind. The man himself is essentially the same. Even the poise of the noble head is as dauntless as of yore, whilst the still-flashing eye shows that the internal fire has not burnt itself out. Time may play havoc with the body, it cannot quench the immortal spirit.

On the Sunday the pulpit and platform were laden with flowers, and on the front of the gallery was the inscription, picked out in white flowers on a mossy background, "God bless you both, and this place, and the home you love." The first words of the morning prayer were, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man be justified," and throughout it expressed absolute dependence upon God and gratitude for the blessings of a lifetime. The text of the sermon was, "Such as he can get" (Lev. xiv. 30), and its central theme that God, having laid down the law and made clear exactly what He wants to be done, accommodates the requirement to human littleness, infirmity, or poverty. In the course of the sermon Dr. Parker told a story which greatly interested the congregation. He had received a letter from a gentleman who said his little five-year old son had been to hear him preach down in the country, and on the way home, the boy hearing that a little girl had taken the preacher some little yellow-

faced flowers out of the public meadow, asked "Does Dr. Parker like flowers?" The boy's father replied, "Yes." After a pause the little fellow said, "Father, I want you to get me a long ladder." "My dear, what do you want a long ladder for?" The reply was, "I want to get up and pluck some stars for Dr. Parker."

Dr. Parker applied the text to himself and the City Temple Church. He said :

"Standing here these thirty years, and elsewhere some twenty years, making fifty years in all, I am enabled to say at the Cross, and with infinite glory to God only, I have so loved my work that I have been giving you such as I could get, such as I was able to get . . . I have worked with you and for you with a willing heart. I have not found my livelihood here and my enjoyment somewhere else . . . God has enabled me to see that there is nothing under heaven like preaching the Gospel, and no sphere so great and so productive in the best results as the sphere pastoral. . . . And you have brought me such as you could get ; some much, very much, too much ; and others, viewed geometrically and arithmetically, small, but viewed in its significance and in its poetry a great blossoming love. . . . We have friends here to-day from other communions to whom we must be more or less of a puzzle and a mystery, because they do not operate upon our ecclesiastical lines. . . . 'Do you mean to say that you have been standing in London for thirty years, or more, and have had nothing to rely upon but the voluntary gifts of the people?' Yes, I can say that. . . . 'But are they to be relied upon?' They are ; I believe in God and in God's men. . . . Standing here at the close of a fifty years' pulpit

ministry I would say, Yes, give me the people, the hearts of the people, the confidence and the love and the thanksgiving of the people, and I have bank enough, treasure unfailing. . . . 'But would it not be nice to have some kind of independency for the minister, so that he could preach what he liked?' That is exactly what I have been preaching these fifty years under the inspiration of God. . . . Now it matters but little to me what men may do or leave undone; I can see the foot of the hill. But I think that a man who can see nearly to the end of his course is just the man to speak about the past. I have nothing to gain, I have nothing to fear, and I am enabled this solemn moment to testify that when a man gives his heart to the ministry of Christ, to the ministry of the Cross, when he has no other object in life except some such objects as are cognate, the result must be good, substantial, practical, lastingly useful." The last words of the sermon were: "Now will you bear with me again as we begin another fifty years. I will give you such as I can get, and may I live in the assurance that you will return to me in co-operation and zealous fidelity and companionship such as you can get. Amen. God seal the vow!"

On Thursday, Dr. Parker's text was Isaiah xlix 4. In the course of the sermon he emphasised his allegiance to the evangelical Gospel, and said he wanted to make it very hard for any man to enter that pulpit who had nothing to preach but an ethical essay. After the service addresses were delivered by distinguished men, who bore valuable testimony to Dr. Parker's character and influence. Dr. Robertson Nicoll, Editor of the *British Weekly*, etc., who presided, said that Dr. Parker's ministry

had been eminent by reason of its intellectual power and splendour, but its deepest characteristic was that it had been an eminently spiritual and religious ministry, a Gospel ministry in the best sense. The Rev. John McNeill, evangelist, described Dr. Parker as Matthew Henry up to date and the Gladstone of the pulpit. Dr. Parker's books had awakened his own enthusiasm for preaching, he owed more to them than to all the Fathers of the Church. When minister of Regent-square he lost no opportunity of hearing Dr. Parker, and many a time was inspired to have "another shot at this business next Sunday." The Rev. Alfred Rowland, Chairman of the Congregational Union, alluded to the ready, generous aid and counsel Dr. Parker had always give his younger brethren, and he had never heard him disparage another preacher. Dr. Monro Gibson said that the greatest, best, and most inspiring thing in the whole of Dr. Parker's fifty years' ministry was that the end of the term found him, not only not tired of his message, but more in love with it than ever. Principal Vaughan Pryce drew a parallel between St. Chrysostom and Dr. Parker. Dr. Guinness Rogers mentioned that when as a youth he preached in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Dr. Parker was occasionally one of his hearers, and dwelt on the significance of so vast an assembly gathering at that hour of the day to do honour to an evangelical preacher. The Rev. H. Price Hughes saluted Dr. Parker in the name of thirty millions of Methodists, as a mighty preacher of the everlasting Gospel and as an evangelical Protestant who was not ashamed of the principles of the Reformation. Dr. William

Adamson, Edinburgh, spoke of the high estimation in which Dr. Parker was held in Scotland, of the marvellous interest his visits to that country had excited, and of the testimony borne by ministers of all denominations to the inspiration and spiritual impulse derived from his written and spoken words. Mr. Compton Rickett, M.P., and Mr. Albert Spicer, M.P., also spoke, the latter as a City man warmly acknowledging Dr. Parker's services to the City of London.

Dr. Parker, who was all but overcome by the eulogies of his friends, was received by the congregation standing, and responded in a few sentences. He said he had listened to every word and tone ; nothing had escaped the attention of his heart, and he thanked his brethren for their noble words. He accepted them, not as praise only, but as cheer, inspiration, and encouragement. After receiving resolutions and illuminated addresses from public bodies, telegrams, and innumerable letters from private friends, one thing stood out with startling vividness—the most beautiful illuminated address signed by all his deacons and presented to himself and Mrs. Parker. "It is after all something to say that after thirty years' co-operation every man has signed the memorial, and I am receiving to-day, if possible, greater kindness from my deacons than I have ever received before. They have shown themselves to be spiritual men, noble-hearted, whole-souled, and when the day of audit comes I know that it will stand well with the account of each of them. I say to all my friends, God bless you, and as you have done to me this day, may God do to you, and

more also, when your day's work is approaching its conclusion, that you may have a common joy and unite in a common song."

The congregation then sang the verse beginning "Oh, that with yonder sacred throng," and Dr. Parker closed the impressive proceedings with the benediction: "May grace, mercy, and peace, the triune blessing of the Triune God, abide with us, till the day break and the shadows flee away! Amen."

The Deacons, in the course of the address to which Dr. Parker refers, speak of themselves as having "the right, as well as the privilege, as no other body of men can have," to bear their united testimony to the value of his ministry. They go on to say:

"We can never cease to be thankful to the great Head of the Church for bringing Dr. Parker to London, where he has been instrumental, not only in erecting the City Temple, but in building up the Church of the living God and creating here in the centre of the City of London a rallying point for Christian workers from all parts of the world."

Another passage reads:

"In the business affairs of the church Dr. Parker has always been our leader, and never has a necessity arisen but he has been foremost in arranging and providing for the requirements of the occasions. We may indeed go further and testify to his forethought in securing the co-operation of his friends outside the church and congregation, in anticipation of expenses which he knew would have to be incurred."

The Deacons add:

"Domestically and personally he has been our wise

guide and faithful friend, sharing our joys and sorrows, so that each of us can bear his testimony to the value and help of Dr. Parker's friendship."

Finally they dwell on Mrs. Parker's "gracious influence," and pray that Pastor and wife may be spared to work together in the City Temple.

The address is signed : "April 1898. E. Harrison, H. W. Chapman, W. Bull, Thomas Wagstaff, John Morgan Richards, W. Mann Cross, Thomas Mitchell."

XVII.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

THE jubilant note that has again and again sounded through these pages must now be changed to one of anguish. At the beginning of 1899 Dr. Parker sustained a bereavement that banished the sunshine from his home and robbed his life of its chief joy. At half-past nine o'clock on the night of Thursday, 26th January, Mrs. Parker passed from earth to heaven. What it meant to the stricken husband to be separated by death from the wife of more than thirty-four years can only be fully understood by those who had opportunities of seeing how closely their lives were entwined. She was his constant companion, not only in the sense of bodily presence, but in the far more important one of spiritual and intellectual communion. While no man can be on occasion more reserved and reticent, more sphinxlike, than Dr. Parker, it is essential to his peace of mind and health of soul that he have a kindred spirit to whom he can unburden himself—communicate new ideas, talk over contemplated plans, and lay bare his inmost thought. Mrs. Parker abundantly supplied exactly that combination of sympathy, appreciation, and encouragement that his peculiar temperament needs. She was to him as a ministering angel, always at his side or within reach

of his voice ; and when the task of the hour was completed it was to her he went, as eagerly and blithely as a released child goes out into the sunshine ; or when some exhausting duty was over it was to her he turned, knowing that she, as none other, would say the right word in the right tone, and supply all that his spirit craved. One of his books is dedicated, "To her to whom my ministry owes all its inspiration, and my life all its joy." To tell how she soothed and comforted him when weary, how she cheered and stimulated him when depressed, how she helped him to bear and forbear when bitterly and unjustly attacked, how her perfect tact and supreme common sense smoothed away many difficulties, how she even battled with his doubts, would be to draw aside the veil from scenes that ought to be kept sacred from the public gaze.

The shadow began to fall in the autumn of 1898. Until then Mrs. Parker had enjoyed radiant health, and throughout her married life hardly knew what sickness was. Her queenly presence was missing from the seat in the centre of the choir gallery immediately behind her husband that with unbroken regularity she had occupied since the opening of the City Temple. On Saturday, November 12th, she underwent a very critical operation ; the next day Dr. Parker reported that it had been successful, and added the word "Hopeful." Almost the first word Mrs. Parker uttered on returning to consciousness was, "You will preach to-morrow?" He answered, "If you wish it," and she replied, "Certainly." By a great effort he managed to preach at both the

services, leaving immediately the sermon was ended and driving rapidly home. The hope that Mrs. Parker, who bore her trying illness with great fortitude and cheerfulness, would recover, was, alas, not realised. For two months she lay hovering between life and death, while Dr. Parker, at her express wish, continued to struggle through his work at the City Temple. He preached on Christmas morning, but it was, he said, "the darkest Christmas we have ever known." It was a pathetic coincidence that Mrs. Parker's little volume of poems entitled *Summer Sonnets* appeared just at this time; in fact she corrected the proofs on her death-bed, and the appreciative reception of the book helped to cheer the author in her illness.

Fear and hope alternated until Friday, 20th January, on which date Dr. Parker wrote in a private note, "I have no hope of preaching on Sunday and Thursday. The doctors have abandoned all hope of saving the life of my wife." Six days afterwards she entered into rest, leaving her grief-stricken husband to face the future alone, and for the time being in despair. The next day the following intimation written by Dr. Parker with his own hand was posted at the City Temple: "Mrs. Parker. She is not here, she is risen. With Christ. J. P." The same day this memorandum attached to Mrs. Parker's will was made known: "I particularly request and direct that at my death those who love me will put on no sign whatever of mourning, but that they will think of me as promoted to a higher school, where I shall meet my Lord and know even as I am known." In obedience to this request the usual symbols of

mourning were almost entirely absent from the attire of the large congregation that assembled at the City Temple on the Sunday morning, when an impressive memorial service was conducted by the Rev. Silas K. Hocking. But, whilst having literally observed the request, the faces of many betrayed the grief that was in their hearts.

At the funeral the next day, Monday, at Hampstead cemetery, a large concourse of people gathered. Prior to the interment a private service was held at Dr. Parker's house, conducted by Principal Vaughan Pryce, who also officiated at the graveside. On one side of the grave, which was lined with laurels, were Canon Benham, Dr. John Clifford, Dr. Monro Gibson, the Rev. W. J. Dawson, the Rev. J. Ossian Davies, and other ministers; opposite were the City Temple choir; Dr. Parker stood at the foot, supported on the one side by Mrs. Parker's sister, Mrs. Yeld, and on the other by his brother-in-law, Mr. A. K. Common, and Mrs. Common. The service was very short; it began with the singing of "O God our help in ages past" and closed with "Beyond the smiling and the weeping"—a great favourite of Mrs. Parker's. The only wreath lowered into the grave was that placed on the coffin by Dr. Parker; it was composed of arum lilies, and attached to it was a card bearing this inscription: "Heart of my heart, life of my life; she is not here, she is risen. Joseph Parker." The name plate bore the words, "Emma Jane Parker, born 20th of June, 1846; ascended 26th of January, 1899. Forever with the Lord, Amen, so let it be." Among those who sent wreaths, telegrams, or messages were representatives

of practically all religious denominations, the Principals of the Congregational colleges, the Bishop of Calcutta (Dr. Welldon), Canon Barker, Dr. Cunningham Geikie, Dr. C. A. Berry (who died suddenly the day following Mrs. Parker's funeral), General Booth, Dr. Marcus Dods, Dr. Alexander Whyte, Rev. Thomas Spurgeon; Lady Henry Somerset, "John Oliver Hobbes," Sir Henry Irving, Mr. J. L. Toole, and Mr. George Grossmith.

At the cemetery Principal Pryce mentioned that Dr. Parker's relatives had advised him to preach at the City Temple as usual on the following Thursday, feeling sure this was what Mrs. Parker would have wished, and that he had decided to make the attempt. At twelve o'clock on Thursday the interior of the City Temple presented a remarkable scene. At the noon service the galleries are never opened unless the area is fully occupied; on this occasion both area and galleries were crowded. As on the Sunday and at the funeral, there were few external signs of mourning, but it was obvious that the vast assembly was very deeply moved, and yearned to show its sympathy with the afflicted preacher. The only direct indication of Mrs. Parker's removal was a white basket of flowers hanging in front of her vacant seat in the choir. The service, taking its usual course, commenced with the hymn (announced by a deacon) "Christ for the world we sing," Dr. Parker entering the pulpit, according to custom, as the congregation rose. After the hymn Dr. Parker read Job xiv. 19: "The waters wear away the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of

man"; and then offered a most affecting prayer, opening with the words :

"While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now that she is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring her back again ? She shall not return unto me, I will go unto her. Thou Almighty, All-good, tearest the rock out of his place, thou dost overturn the proud mountain. They say, Thou doest all things well : may we be able some day to say this. If any poor man's faith is lost in the flood of his distress, Thou wilt not rebuke him in anger, for Thy love is greater than our unbelief. Oh that we may stand in the sanctuary of Thy love !—wondrous love, cruel love, devastating love, all-healing love !"

Another hymn, "Talk with us, Lord, Thyself reveal," having been sung, Dr. Parker made the customary announcement that the service is held in the City Temple every Thursday morning, and added : "We began it in 1869 ; this is now 1899. And the years in going make no noise, neither did they in coming ; there are silent blessings, and there are silent thieves. The offering which is taken at the close expresses Christian love and co-operation in the great work." He then said : "I want no dreary tunes now, if you please, and nothing pathetic, heart-breaking, and groaning, whining. Is there any triumph in the Gospel ? For God's sake, let me hear it !"

The subject of the sermon was Grief and Silence—"And none spake a word unto him ; for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job ii. 13). The

preacher must have been endowed with power from on high to enable him to go through the ordeal of the morning as he did. The discourse contained no direct allusion to his own loss, but the experience he had passed through saturated every sentence as he depicted the agony of grief, the sense of helplessness and despair in the presence of an irreparable loss, the blow to faith, the futility of human sympathy, and then finally the only source of real consolation.

As a whole the discourse was one of the most wonderful the preacher has ever delivered.* One writer says : " The sermon was delivered with Dr. Parker's customary force and dramatic spirit. At times his voice fell into a whisper, and men strained forward to catch its accents ; then it rang forth filling the building with its resonant notes ; all through his hearers were on a high-tension strain, half-anticipating a breakdown, and when the Doctor sat down an eloquent sigh of relief came from his hearers. Three minutes later when he stood up again to announce the closing hymn, close observers saw how severe the preacher's struggle had really been. His face was pale and his eyes haggard, and his gesticulations were now mechanical. With difficulty he commanded his voice " as he said :

" I cannot sufficiently thank my friends for all their love. As to writing letters, it is absolutely out of the question, but let the heart thank you with all fervour and all appreciation. I asked God—though I have not prayed for several days—to send her to be near me this morning that I might get through this service without a

* A verbatim report of prayer and sermon appears in the *City Temple Pulpit*, volume i. pp. 49-57.

quaver or a tear. That prayer has been happily realised. When I have seen all you have done, and all that has been done by the multitudes whom you represent, I have said, 'Behold, how they loved her !' and in that exclamation I said symbolically, not exhaustively, all that was in mine heart. I had two courses before me—one, gloomy silence, and the other, a determined and in some sense heroic effort to take up my work again. The one course meant old-age—withered, hopeless, pithless old age ; and the other, if sanctified, meant renewal of energy and recall of youth, and a continuance for a little time of what she thought my best work for God and for man. I thank you, my heart thanks you. I cannot write to you, but can thus ask you to tell everybody you meet who has taken part in this sacrament of sorrow that I thank you and thank them all. I cannot sing your doxology to-day. I have not wholly given up my faith ; it is staggering, I am drunk with unbelief ; but who knows but that to-morrow I may sing that doxology in another place and quite loudly. Hope thou in God ! Now, dear friends, you can sing the doxology, and I will pronounce the benediction."

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow" having been sung, Dr. Parker thus closed the service : "May the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be with us until we meet again ! Amen."

And then the old man went to his lonely darkened home followed by the sympathy and prayers of all hearts. He did not preach the following Sunday, his next appearance in the City Temple pulpit being on the Thursday, when his subject was "Texts Explained by Affliction" (Luke xxiv. 31). At his

first Sunday service (12th February) he made the welcome announcement that God helping him he would not shirk his work.

"A man cannot have been living thirty-four years in brightest sunshine, and suddenly stop. I have directed that all the hymns this morning shall be cheerful. That desire has been respected, except in that, to me, always dreadful hymn, number 312, 'I need Thee every hour'—the most selfish pietism I know of; beautiful in words, but not fitted to my soul just now. There is only one tone that becomes me. I have been told, with you, not to go into mourning; mourning is not a question of clothing only. See that your souls be not in mourning, see that your souls be not clothed with crape. Now she bids me say to this great congregation, 'Stand up and sing with your soul, Onward Christian soldiers.'"

The City Temple church and congregation showed their affection for Mrs. Parker by erecting a handsome granite monument over her grave, and placing a beautiful stained glass window in the City Temple. The monument is inscribed: "To the Memory of Emma Jane Parker, Born June 20th, 1846, Ascended January 26th, 1899. For more than thirty-four years the loving and devoted wife of Joseph Parker, Minister of the City Temple, London. Gratefully erected by the Church and Congregation. 'Purer, dearer, with eyes clearer, on the home shore.'—E.J.P."—the quotation being from one of Mrs. Parker's poems. The subject of the window is the scene inside the house at Bethany, when Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, "heard His word."

Unveiling the window on Sunday morning, June

18th, 1899, Dr. Parker said : "To the glory of God and in loving fidelity to the memory of Emma Jane Parker, I accept the window which has just been erected in her honour on behalf of the trustees of the City Temple, and that window will remain part of this freehold so long as the providence of God may determine. It will remain, I trust, for ever. She hath done us good and not evil all the days of her life. She was a radiant daughter of God, and her memory shall never be eclipsed." A memorial window has also been placed in Union Congregational Church, Sunderland, by Mrs. Parker's brother, Mr. F. J. Common, and his wife.

As is always the case, it was not during the trying illness, nor at the moment of death, nor at the funeral, nor when first resuming work, that the bereaved one most realised his loss ; it is as day succeeds day and the lonely road stretches before him, with neither son nor daughter to relieve his solitude—for he never had any children of his own—that he misses his wife with a dull agony that sometimes sinks into despair. During 1899 he made several heartbreaking allusions to his loneliness and desolation. We find him saying in March, 1899, from the pulpit : "It is for you to say whether you care for this ministry and for its perpetuation. For my own part, I would to God it were done at this moment ; but if I have to continue longer, I shall do my work the better in the sunshine of your love and co-operation. As for life, I hate it now, when I am left to myself ; I can only accept it, and then with a kind of murmur, as God Himself says, I want you to go on just a little longer." A few

weeks later he says that "with one exception" he had lived to know that every time God had denied his supplication God was right and he was wrong. "That one exception waits. My soul thinks it will puzzle God to find an answer, but we must go back on the past, and by the lamp of the past we must try to throw a light on the gloom of the future."

During 1899 and 1900 Dr. Parker kept to his pulpit and study more closely than ever, finding in hard unremitting work the only alleviation of his sorrow. In July, 1899, he preached at the re-opening of Wesley Chapel, City Road, and speaking at the luncheon which followed he said: "This is the first time I have ventured out since the gloomy days of January. I have limited myself since that dreary month to my own pulpit and to my own special pastoral work . . . All life concentrates itself in one point in my experience; I dwell in a tent of misery pitched by the river of sorrow, but from the window of that tent I can see something that indicates hope, brightness, a broader, a Sabbatic day."

On the last Sunday morning in July Dr. Parker said:—

"A friend came to me on Thursday morning broken-hearted, and said, concerning his ascended one, 'I feel as if I must pray to her.' Said I, 'Why not? I pray to mine every day. I never come to the work without asking her to come with me, and help me in the strength of God's grace to do it.' And she does come. I would not have any cruel knife cutting the filaments that bind the world and the separated lives of time and space. This is only the body-world, the flesh-world, the unreal-world; it is the other world that is

real. 'I never come to this place,' said I, 'without her coming with me. Why should not you pray to your dear one? I always say to mine: If you are permitted to come close to us while we are yet in the body, just bring some sweet flower, some message that may be whispered to the soul; I shall know it, have no fear of that—come!' I do not recognise the atheism of cutting the life to pieces. I continue everything my wife did; her weekly offering is paid every Sunday morning and every Sunday evening, and all her subscriptions, and all the old people that hung upon her in her visible lifetime are recognised and remembered. I could not consent to have the house pulled to pieces in this ruthless way, everything being taken down, cut up, abolished and the whole absolutely obliterated and forgotten. That cannot be the meaning of the Divine love. So I encouraged my friend to pray to his wife, and to pray to God to ask her to come to his help. She will be more to him than twelve legions of unknown angels."

Commenting upon these utterances a Roman Catholic journal referred to Dr. Parker as "speaking out for the invocation of saints": whereupon a Protestant weekly paper remarked, "We think the officials of the Congregational Union are fairly entitled to ask an explanation"! As Dr. Parker says, "the experience is too mystical to be understood by literalists."

After about six weeks' rest, partly spent with the Rev. Charles Garrett, who also was mourning the loss of his wife, Dr. Parker, being, as he wrote, "miserable without work," resumed his Thursday service a week earlier than had been announced. He received a most hearty welcome from a very large congregation, who were just as delighted to

have him back as he was to return. He said he had longed for that day. "There is no place like the sanctuary ; the hills tire us, and the ocean sinks into a mournful monotony, but the word of the Lord, which is the music of His heart, is a joy for ever." At his last Thursday service in 1899, in bidding good-bye to the year, Dr. Parker spoke of it as "the strangest year I have ever known,—a black jewel, a year of years. Some years are centuries. Sometimes, however, we can say—I am hoping for the golden hour soon to come when I also can say—Thou doest all things well."

A snowstorm having somewhat diminished the congregation at the City Temple one Sunday morning in February, 1900, Dr. Parker told the people who were present that he had been standing there for nearly thirty-one years, and the only opponent he ever feared was the weather. When he talked about leaving the City Temple for ever it had been said to him, "Don't you do anything of the kind, because the people will tell you when they are tired of you." "Never!" exclaimed Dr. Parker, with flashing eye ; "I will never leave a congregation to tell me they are tired, I will not allow any congregation to leave me ; I will leave the congregation. 'The congregation will tell you'—never ! That would be the height of ingratitude, the basest of treachery."

A pathetic little incident occurred at a Thursday service in March, 1900. Having announced that he would preach on Good Friday morning at eleven o'clock Dr. Parker added that he had something else to say, but he was now so unlike himself that he

forgot much. "Up to this year," he added, "I have never in my long-continued ministry kept a diary of any engagement, but I cannot boast of that any longer. I never entered any engagement in a calendar or a diary. Mention a date six months ahead, and I would tell you what I had to do on that day. But the Lord staineth the pride of all glory and drives men to small and great humiliations."

In May Dr. Parker made a memorable appearance before the assembly of the Congregational Union. The intimation in the official programme that he was to speak at the principal session excited great interest. His topic was unknown, and when, in the most masterly style, Dr. Parker proceeded to pronounce a eulogy upon Dr. Guinness Rogers, who at the age of seventy-seven had just relinquished the regular work of the ministry, the whole assembly was moved with deep feeling, which reached a climax when Dr. Parker took Dr. Rogers by the hand and expressed to him, in the name of the Congregational churches, their appreciation and affection. The two aged stalwarts standing together in the City Temple pulpit, both struggling with suppressed emotion, as were many who looked on, presented a heart-stirring spectacle that can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

In September Dr. Parker interrupted his vacation—most of which was spent in the Lake District, the scene of many happy holidays with Mrs. Parker—in order to preach in the City Temple by request of the Institute of Journalists. The sermon was delivered on Sunday evening, 9th September, from the text, "The outward business of the house of God."

Before the year closed Dr. Parker gave pleasing evidence of his unimpaired physical vigour. Having on the last Sunday in October preached twice, he on the Tuesday travelled to Edinburgh, on Wednesday throughout the day sat in the Waverley Market an interested spectator of the proceedings connected with the union of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches of Scotland, in the evening himself addressed the vast assembly, during the night travelled to London, and on the Thursday conducted the noon service at the City Temple as usual, preaching a powerful sermon without showing the least sign of fatigue.

The week before Christmas, at the pressing request of the editor, Mr. T. H. Dahle, Dr. Parker conducted the *Sun* evening newspaper for six days, during which the circulation increased by 150,000. The proprietors of the *Sun* offered Dr. Parker a handsome cheque in acknowledgment of his services, but he tore it up in their presence, and, while taking care that his assistants were duly paid, took not one penny himself.

XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

IN August, 1900, during his holiday, Dr. Parker wrote in the *British Weekly*, "For some reason or other I look upon 1901 as my last year of public work." Many people noted and quoted this sentence, and, apparently not heeding what immediately followed, construed it as an intimation of his impending retirement from public life. But he added, "Whether it be so or not it is for the Lord alone to decide. If He in great mercy would permit me to have even a whisper in the matter I would say, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace.' For my strength is as water poured out; my heart is so grieved with troubles and with bruises for which there is no healing. Though I cannot answer this cry in my soul I can work in the spirit of it, and thus work in tenderness, in self-chiding, and in trembling hope." From these pathetic words it is evident that, whatever the future may bring, Dr. Parker has no present intention of himself interrupting his great work. His friends rejoice in the knowledge that, strenuous as has been his life, and severe as have been his afflictions, he is more than equal to the discharge of his heavy responsibilities, that his preaching is now more effective than it ever was, and that the number of those who

wait upon his ministry is to-day greater than at any period of his life. In years he is a septuagenarian ; in physical health, in intellectual mastery, in spiritual freshness, he has no junior ; whilst in ministering to others his long and diverse experience gives him an advantage over younger men.

He is steadily going on with all his varied activity—preaching with unbroken regularity at the City Temple and occasionally elsewhere, every word of his morning prayers and sermons being reported and printed ; writing books, dictating articles, receiving deputations, giving counsel and advice to numerous applicants, sending messages of help and cheer in all directions, closely following current affairs, great and small, and having books read to him for hours together daily. He has relaxed nothing. He continues to rise early, and to keep well ahead of the day's work. He takes regular exercise in walking and with dumbbells. On Sundays and Thursdays he goes on foot a considerable part of the way from Hampstead to the City Temple, and does not shirk the cold bath that always awaits him. He keeps a cool firm finger on the pulse of everything connected with the City Temple, and in all his relations is not one whit less punctual, prompt, alert, and observant of minutiae than when he had yet to make his position. Take him all in all, he is indeed a marvel of a man,—one of the giants of the race, too great to be accurately estimated by his contemporaries, too complex to be easily or altogether understood ; an insoluble enigma, a perpetual contradiction, to persons of small mind who cannot see below the surface but

yet know exactly what everybody ought and ought not to do.

Few things have been more interesting to Dr. Parker than an invitation which he received from the present Vicar of his native town. The Vicar is the son-in-law of Dean Farrar. The invitation was for Dr. Parker to occupy the pulpit of Hexham Abbey on Sunday evening or any evening during the week. Dr. Parker considered this invitation as, in its own way, almost the crowning point of his public life. To think of preaching in the Abbey, within whose shadow he had played marbles; to think of a Dissenter in the pulpit of one of the oldest abbeys in England! There was no reservation or limitation in the invitation beyond the terms mentioned above. Dr. Parker wrote to the young Vicar, saying he was ready at any moment to take train for the North and carry out the Vicar's request, but he thought it only right to ask him whether he really knew what such an invitation involved—that he was proposing a very bold experiment that might cost him dear in the future. Dr. Parker explicitly said that he was ready to accept the invitation, but he considered it prudent to put the Vicar on his guard.

As 1901 opens there is every prospect that it will be the busiest and most influential year of Dr. Parker's public life, as well as a momentous one in the history of the denomination with which he is associated. This year he enjoys the unique honour of being for the second time Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales; he has entered with great spirit upon the duties of the

office, and manifested an earnest desire and unmistakable ability to render practical service to his brethren. The outspoken sermon on "Christ and the Multitude" (Matthew ix. 36), which he delivered in the Guildhall on January 28th, by way of inaugurating the Simultaneous Mission, was to many a surprising revelation of his undiminished power.

This year, God willing, will witness the completion of what is in some respects his most important book—*The Pulpit Bible*. Although he has had this work in contemplation for more than twenty-five years, he did not settle down to the execution of his idea until he had reached his seventieth year. The book is to be the size of the usual Pulpit Bible, and on the margin will be brief notes by Dr. Parker as suggestive and helpful as his genius and experience enable him to make them. "That to me," he says, "is the most valuable book I have ever attempted—to take my heart and set it out on the margin of the Bible verse by verse." The work, as its name indicates, is mainly intended for preachers, and in time to come it will probably be the most prized of all Dr. Parker's books.

We know not what the future will bring. We do know what many thousands in all parts of the world, who have benefited by Dr. Parker's ministry and have learned to admire and love the man, hope and pray for—that for many years he may continue to be a bright and shining light, that God will be specially kind and tender to him in his old age, and that his end may be peace.

Our task is done—how imperfectly and inadequately none can know so well as the writer. We have sought to trace this great career through seventy years of struggle and victory, cloud and sunshine, agony and joy,—what is the conclusion of the whole matter? Let Joseph Parker himself answer. At Christmastide, 1899, he writes with a pen dipped in blood :

“What does it all come to? Now ‘the hurly-burly’s done’ how does the whole action of the past shape itself, and what is it as to value, and meaning, and purpose? Is life a laughing disappointment, or a disappointing laugh? That is a delicate question. If I had to answer it in one mood only, and in one unqualified sentence, I should say, I end life as a bitterly disappointed man. But if time were allowed me, and the mood were permitted to change, I should add : Yet above all the disappointment and misery there arise memories of gladness and of holy surprise which fill me with unutterable wonder and gratitude. A man must not be asked to sum up his life either in its sunniest hour or in its gloomiest midnight. At this moment—the darkest my life has ever seen, a moment of unutterable misery, a moment in which I feel lonesome, overborne, almost friendless, and hopeless—I cannot but say, in all the darkening and mocking sorrow, I have received more than I have deserved, and good is the hand of the Lord.”

DR. PARKER'S CREED.

I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three in One and One in Three.

I believe in the Bible as a Divine revelation of the will of God in all that respects human character, salvation, and destiny. The Bible is to me complete, authoritative, final. Everything that the soul really needs is to be found in the Bible. I believe in the Evangelical view of the Fall of Adam. Even if Evolution is true, it does not touch this fact. At some time or other man fell, fell into disobedience, sin, and helplessness. At that point he became known to history as a sinner.

I believe that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. I do not believe that He died for some to the neglect of others. I believe in the impartiality of the Divine love. Christ came to seek and to save the lost. How many were lost? I believe all were lost, therefore He came to seek and to save all. I believe there is no man out of hell who need ever go into it. No man is fated to be lost. The Creator of all seeks to be the Saviour of all.

I believe the wicked will be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God. That there is punishment after death no reader of the Bible can deny. What it is no imagination can conceive. "My soul, come not thou into that secret." Not, "What

is hell?" but, "How can I escape hell?" is my great concern. Do not let us lose ourselves in mere speculation. Hell begins here, and Heaven also.

I believe there is nothing worth preaching but the Evangelical faith, though the way of preaching it is endlessly varied. I judge no man. To God every man must make his last appeal. I preach the love of Christ, the power of the Cross, the One Priesthood of the One Priest.

Reader! be sure to attend to matters that are vital and practical, and beware of all questions that are wordy, superficial, and fanciful. Do you love the Saviour? Do you really, truly, and heartily love Him? If so, what are you doing to serve Him? Are you working, teaching, visiting, giving? Not every one that *saith* . . . but he that *doeth*. There must of course be "saying"; yet if it be not followed by "doing," it will be mockery and vanity. The day of our opportunity is very short: let us seize every hour, and press it into the dear Master's service. He may call for us this very day! Next Sunday we may be in heaven! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might! Some are working with great heartiness, and for their earnest ministry I thank God. They have multiplied my own, and given me strength to do more. The longer I live, and the farther I see into life, the more do I feel that the turning of men to Christ is the sublimest service possible to man. Pray for me that my faith fail not.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.



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